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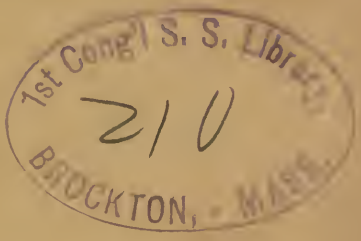

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Mary Somerville's Childhood

Women Worth Emulating.

BY

CLARA L. BALFOUR.

"Oh, let me emulate the good and wise;
Gaze on their course, and mark their way,
Until my mind and soul, like theirs, may rise—
Bathed in the light of Heavenly day!"

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PREFACE.

EMULATION is the spirit most desirable to arouse in the young. What of personal progress and relative usefulness has been effected by others, is always a valuable and inspiriting study. That which we are constrained to approve and admire we are led to emulate, even where imitation may not be possible. The sterling qualities which made a character excellent, still more than the mental powers which made it remarkable, convey lessons for instruction and encouragement that all can apply.

It is with this purpose that the following varied selections of womanly worth and wisdom are pre-

sented to the young of their own sex, in the hope that studious habits, intellectual pursuits, domestic industry, and sound religious principles, may be promoted and confirmed by such examples.

CLARA LUCAS BALFOUR.

Croydon, 1877.

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Women worth Emulating.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. Mary Somerville.

THE records of biography are not always encouraging to all minds. The talents seem so great, the education and opportunities so advantageous, that ordinary readers are apt to say, "Of what use is it that I study such a life? It is quite beyond my range, both in gifts and graces. Coming from the contemplation of such excellence, or such training, I am not roused but depressed."

This is not by any means a feeling that should be encouraged. There are mental heights we may not ever scale, yet it is well to know of those who have,

and in struggling upward we are strengthened even by the effort. As the feeblest climber on a mountain-side gets wider views at every step and breathes a more exhilarating air, winning some increase of vigour by the effort, so we dwellers on the more level plain of humanity gain in mental perception and moral force, when we contemplate the recorded progress of those who have gained the lofty heights of scientific investigation, benefited their age, and done honour to womanhood.

One reflection may well reconcile us to the surpassing triumphs of some of whom we read with a humbling sense of our own deficiencies, it is, that however literary and scientific triumphs may—as a general thing, must—be beyond our range and removed from our imitation, there is a path which we all can strive to tread, and where, when we are yet "a great way off," one All-seeing Eye beholds us, one Almighty Hand is stretched out to guide us. Only let us ask from the depths of our heart for help in treading the narrow path that leads to life eternal, and it will surely be given; for "He hath promised who is faithful."

This consolatory, this ennobling thought enables us to delight in all the varied manifestations of excellence with which the Almighty has benefited the world. We praise Him for the beauty He has spread around in the natural world, to lead our thoughts to Him; and still more should we praise Him for the endowments He has given in the human

world, to men and women who have lived and laboured and taught among us.

To see God in all things, and to praise Him for all His gifts to mankind, is the hallowed duty and privilege of the young Christian. It is in this grateful frame of mind that we should read of the wise and good; and if, amid much that is beyond our imitation, either in the possession or application of special faculties, yet there should be some sweet lessons of love and duty that come home to the ordinary pursuits and business of life, the interest will be increased, and the teaching of the life more valuable.

In the year 1783 there was a healthy, merry, beautiful little girl of three years old (the daughter of an ancient family) running about on the links at Burntisland, on the coast of Fife, opposite Edinburgh. Though well born, it was necessary that Mrs. Fairfax should live with great economy during the absence of her husband, an officer in the navy, who had nothing but his pay to depend on. In their retirement, therefore, her little daughter had no companions in her own rank of life but an elder brother, who went early to the Edinburgh High School; no luxurious indulgences, and certainly very little attention from servants. She ran about at her own will, and made her own amusements. The child was not fond of dolls or toys, she found her childish pleasures in gathering wild-flowers, wandering on the sea-shore watching the birds, and the

sea, and the clouds; she was truly nature's playfellow, yet always active and willing to be useful. Perhaps the first feeling roused in her infant mind was love for the feathered race, and tenderness to all dumb creatures, of whom she made companions. Some banks of thistles and groundsel that intersected the more cultivated ground at Mrs. Fairfax's abode attracted multitudes of goldfinches and other birds, and a deep love for them sprang up in the child's heart, which remained with her to the end of her long life. Happy the child who early learns to love and protect the animal creation. It is the beginning of good feelings, which soften the heart and elevate the mind.

But little Mary Fairfax, while leading a seemingly very careless childhood, soon began to be useful in household matters. At seven or eight, she pulled fruit for preserving, shelled peas, fed the poultry, and made experiments in bottling gooseberries. She was also taught by her good mother to read the Bible, and to say her simple prayers, morning and evening. Up to ten years of age there could not have been any child among the ranks of the gentry less instructed in all book knowledge. But her physical education was excellent. Plenty of exercise and plain food confirmed her health; and for moral culture, strict veracity and great kindness were the wholesome foundations on which her character was built.

Mrs. Somerville says in her own beautiful and

simple biographic sketch,* "My father came home from sea and was shocked to find me such a savage. I had not yet been taught to write; and although I amused myself by reading 'The Arabian Nights,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' and 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' I read very badly." Being compelled to read aloud to her father was, she says, "a real penance" to her; but when she was allowed to help him in his favourite recreation of gardening, she found a pleasure that compensated for her bookish toils. At length Captain Fairfax said to his wife, "This kind of life will never do; Mary must at least know how to write and keep accounts;" and so she was sent off to a boarding-school at Musselburgh. As boarding-schools were then, this was a dreadful change to the poor child. Her lithe little form, straight as an arrow, which had been used to roaming the mountain-side, was soon cased in stiff stays, with steel busk and collar to form her shape (deform it, more likely); a dreary page of Johnson's Dictionary was given her to learn, and dull lessons followed on first principles of writing, and rudiments of grammar. She adds, "The teaching was extremely tedious and inefficient."

You young people of the present day, with your capital books and excellent teachers, need to be reminded of what education was, even for the upper classes, in the days of your immediate ancestors.

* See introduction to the life of Mrs. Somerville, by her daughter, p. 20.

For this reason I have given you this brief sketch of the early childhood of one who attained the very first ranks among the scientific investigators and benefactors of her age,—an age, be it remembered, eminent beyond all that have preceded it in scientific discoveries and advancement. There have been times when some were mental giants, simply because their compeers were pigmies. That was not the case in the times that produced the Herschels, James Watt, George Stephenson, Davy, Faraday, and a host of others.

The Musselburgh schooldays lasted, fortunately, only a year. At the age of eleven, the illness of Mrs. Fairfax called her young daughter home; and it pained the child's grateful heart that her progress at school was so slight, that when a letter came from a relative she could "neither compose an answer nor spell the words;" and she was reproached for having cost so much—the school terms had been high—and learned so little.

Naturally shy and retiring, no one knew what was passing in the poor little girl's mind; but she well remembered in after-life how she mourned over her ignorance, and how intently she desired to attain knowledge. This was a salutary state of feeling, especially when, as in her case, there was a strong spirit of perseverance; with her, indeed, it was so strong that, in her own very humble estimate of her powers, she always placed perseverance as her greatest characteristic. And, my dear young

readers, it is a great truth that what we call "Genius," and talk about vaguely as if it was a something that exonerated its possessor from the need of patient, careful plodding, is in reality the power to take great pains; to go over and over again in some hard study, some toilsome work until it ceases to be hard or toilsome. In mental as in spiritual things, the Scripture maxim applies—"Patient continuance in well-doing;" that which the word perseverance comprehends, and which is, indeed, the true element of success in all things.

A child who felt her ignorance a sorrow, and whose spirit was of the kind indicated, would soon overcome her difficultics. She did not allow her likes or dislikes to influence her; but with great docility resolved to learn all she could. From her active habits, needlework was not pleasant to her; and an aunt, in Scottish phrase, once said, "Mary does not shew (sew) any more than if she were a man." Nevertheless, she set herself to overcome her repugnance, and became skilful with her needle, both in plain and fancy work.

A piano came to her home, and she began to learn music, which was then very imperfectly taught; but she rose in the morning and practised so sedulously that she speedily gained a facility which her family rejoiced in, for no accomplishment in a country house is more likely to delight a home circle. But, unhappily, the shyness of the young pianist always prevented her in early days doing

justice to herself. Meanwhile, she learned to write a good hand, and made some, not great, progress in arithmetic. The little French she had been taught at school she added to by puzzling out and translating from French books, by herself, and so almost insensibly acquired a reading knowledge of the language.

One day, at the house of a friend, as she was looking in a magazine of a fashionable kind for a pattern of ladies' work, she came upon some letters oddly arranged—an algebraic problem. Asking the meaning, she heard the word Algebra for the first time. She thought about the word and took every opportunity that her great diffidence permitted to get further explanation. She was told of the need of arithmetic in the higher branches and mathematics. She thought that some books in the home library might help her, and so she pored over some books of navigation; and though she made very little progress in what she wanted to know, she learned enough to open her mind to the value of solid studies and to interest her in them. Meanwhile, from some elementary books, probably her brother's, she began to teach herself Latin, and with no help of regular instruction learned enough to enable her to read Cæsar's Commentaries, and to feel an interest in her reading.

Her habit of early rising was her great help, and enabled her to pursue her studies unmolested. She was very diligent in performing all that she was

required to do in her daily domestic avocations, so that no fault could be found with her for neglecting anything required of her in the ordinary pursuits of life. Thus the lonely little student went on with her studies, until her progress was so considerable that when on a visit to her uncle, the Rev. Dr. Somerville, he found she had grounded herself both in Latin and Greek. He gave her books, and what was better, a word of encouragement, and she at length possessed a Euclid, and advanced into mathematics.

The word of encouragement must have been indeed precious from its rarity. She was not only laughed at but censured for the studies she applied herself to; "going out of the female province" was then the common phrase of disapproval. Poor girl! it was to her, as it has been to multitudes in the old times of darkness and prejudice, a strange thing to find that the world recognised ignorance as the female province.

However, she persevered in all gentleness, yet with ceaseless energy. No one could say that she neglected any ladylike acquirements. Her skill with the pencil was so marked that she was permitted to have some good instruction, and she studied under an eminent master in Scotland, attaining such proficiency that her paintings and drawings during her whole life were much admired, and she never, even in extreme old age, entirely laid aside that delightful art. Once in her youth, on her skill being spoken of in the presence of a

rather harsh old lady, the latter remarked, with more frankness than politeness, "I am glad that Miss Fairfax has any kind of talent that may enable her to win her bread, for every one knows she will not have a sixpence."

When she grew up and was introduced more frequently into society,—her father having greatly distinguished himself in a naval victory, and gained promotion,—she was much admired, not only for her personal attractions, which were a natural gift, but for the charm of her manners, her sweet voice, and many graceful accomplishments. Of slight figure, small stature, and delicately fair complexion, she looked the embodiment of youth and feminine refinement.

She was naturally much sought after, even though her severe studies and varied attainments were so little understood as to be regarded rather as an eccentricity, merely to be treated with indulgence, as the strange caprice of a lovely girl left much to herself, and allowed to employ her leisure in her own peculiar way.

Mr. Samuel Greig, a connection of her mother's family, and Commissioner of the Russian Navy and Russian Consul for Britain, paid a visit to Admiral and Mrs. Fairfax, which ended in his proposing for the hand of their daughter, and being accepted. Miss Fairfax was then in her twenty-fourth year, and the preparations for her marriage were made on a scale of economy very unusual in her rank in

these extravagant days. She says, "Fortune I had none, and my mother could only afford to give me a very moderate trousseau, consisting chiefly of fine personal and household linen. When I was going away, she gave me twenty pounds to buy a shawl or something warm for the winter. I knew that Sir Arthur Shee, of the Academy of Paintings, had painted a portrait of my father immediately after the battle of Camperdown, and I went to see it. The likeness pleased me; the price was twenty pounds; so, instead of a warm shawl, I bought my father's picture."

It is pleasant to read that soon after she had warmed her heart by possessing this treasure, she had a gift of furs presented to her by her husband's brother.

In many sketches of this lady's life it was said that her first husband directed her studies, and aided her in what became her favourite pursuits. This was very generally received and repeated as a truth; but in the work on her mother's life, by Miss Martha Somerville, this is positively contradicted. Mr. Greig is said not to have admired learning in women, and that he loved his charming wife in spite of, and not for, her intellectual attainments. The entire absence of all assumption, her manners and conversation, disarmed the prejudice which then was felt at any unusual mental gifts.

It is noticeable that in every period of her life this lady was a learner. I think that is why she

kept her faculties so bright through the long life that was granted her. When a young bride in London, she took the opportunity of obtaining lessons from a French lady, and perfected herself in that language. Afterwards she studied German and Italian, and all this with the motive of reading the works of scientific men in those languages.

Her married life lasted only three years, and she was left a widow, with two little sons, at the age of twenty-seven. Shattered in health by her trials, she returned to Scotland to her parents' house, and found consolation in the care of her children, and after a time, in pursuing her studies. As she was now independent, no one could prevent her so employing herself in her retirement, and for five years she continued her scientific researches. There were none to praise—that she did not require, knowledge being to her its own reward; but there seem to have been many to wonder and to blame. However, her kind uncle, the Rev. Dr. Somerville, who had first shown his sympathy with her tastes and pursuits, always stood her friend; and his son, a medical man, became her second husband in 1812, to the great joy of most of the family.

The following, showing the rudeness that prejudice sometimes engenders, is recorded in Mrs. Somerville's biography: "I received a most impertinent letter from one of his (Dr. Somerville's) sisters, who was unmarried, and younger than I,

saying she hoped I 'would give up my foolish manner of life and studies, and make a respectable and useful wife to her brother.'" This strange presumption, though it was freely forgiven, yet created a coldness and reserve ever after.

It was a singular fact in the history of Mary Fairfax that she was born at her Uncle Somerville's house, and Mrs. Fairfax being extremely ill, she was taken by her aunt, who had an infant at the time, and nursed by her, and was ever regarded as a daughter of the house before she formed the marriage which made her so.

The Rev. Dr. Somerville, speaking of his son's marriage, says, "Miss Fairfax had been born and nursed at my house, her father being abroad at the time on public service. She afterwards often resided in my family, was occasionally my scholar, and was looked upon by me and my wife as if she had been one of our own children. I can truly say, that next to them she was the object of our most tender regard. Her ardent thirst for knowledge, her assiduous application to study, and her eminent proficiency in science and the fine arts, have procured her a celebrity rarely obtained by any of her sex. But she never displays any pretensions to superiority, while the affability of her temper and the gentleness of her manner afford constant sources of gratification to her friends."

The marriage proved in all respects happy. Dr. Somerville entered with zeal into all his wife's

studies; indeed, he was himself devoted to scientific pursuits, both in his profession as a physician and in his leisure hours. He was a tender and generous step-father to the one surviving son of his wife's first marriage. There were three daughters of the second marriage—Margaret, Martha, and Mary. The first, to her parents' great grief, died in early life; the two latter survived to be the tender ministers to their mother's declining years, her literary helpers, and biographers.

The life of Mrs. Somerville, from the time of her second marriage, is but a happy record of her scientific achievements; and the publication of her valuable books. One trouble came—a loss of fortune, which compelled them to remove from their house in Hanover Square, and made Dr. Somerville accept the post of physician to Chelsea Hospital, in 1827, and take up his abode there. The residence never suited Mrs. Somerville's health, but she employed herself with characteristic perseverance and cheerfulness.

In 1831, she brought out her "Mechanism of the Heavens." This was followed by her chief work, "The Connection of the Physical Sciences," which ran through several editions, and became a class book at our universities.

I cannot refrain from mentioning that I met with that book in a very remote region. At the little town of St. Just, at the extreme west point of England, near Cape Cornwall, a Literary and Me-

chanics' Institution was built, which I visited in 1850. Being shown into the library, I took up a book that was lying on the table, and found it was "The Connection of the Physical Sciences," and its worn binding and well-thumbed pages bore evidence of its having been largely circulated amongst working-class readers. I thought it a great tribute to the value of the book, and equally an evidence of the intelligence of Cornish working-men.

After some years, these first works were followed by her "Physical Geography;" and when old age had settled down upon her, she wrote "Molecular and Microscopic Science." Honours came from foreign lands, as well as from learned Societies at home. She was elected Honorary Member of the Royal Geographical Society, the same year that a similar honour was conferred on Miss Caroline Herschel, the sister and aunt of the two eminent astronomers Sir William and Sir John Herschel—herself no less eminent. The Royal Theresa Academy of Science elected Mrs. Somerville a member; and Geographical Societies, both in Britain and on the Continent, enrolled her honoured name in their lists.

Her correspondence was very large with all the eminent literati of her time, and she enjoyed the friendship of the distinguished men and women who made the intellectual society of the age.

A pension of two hundred pounds a year for her life was well bestowed during Sir Robert Peel's time

of office; and, her health requiring change, she went to the Continent with Dr. Somerville and their daughters. After making many excursions to different cities and kingdoms, the family finally settled down in Italy. At Rome, Florence, Naples, and Geneva, Mrs. Somerville in turn resided, always actively employed in every good work—the anti-slavery question, the freedom and unification of Italy, the abolition of the horrors of vivisection, as practised by foreign surgeons under the specious name of scientific investigation, and, alas! coming into our own Schools of Anatomy. Ever this detestable cruelty found in her a stern opponent. Education for the poor, and especially a more liberal education for women, called all her energies into exercise long after she had reached her eightieth year.

Her beloved husband, full of years and honours, passed away some time before her own death; but though bereaved and stricken, she was patient and resigned. Her daughters were not only her children, but her companions and friends—one in heart and mind. So years passed on, not withering, but ripening all the hallowed graces of the mind and soul in Mary Somerville. Though she lived to be ninety-two, it can scarcely be said that she ever lost her youth, her intelligence remaining so clear, her spirits so fresh, her sympathies so active. Able to read without spectacles, to write to and converse with her friends; a slight deafness and a little tremor of the hands alone told that the vital

energy was flagging, while her soul was light in the Lord. On principle, she said but little on her religious opinions, and never entered into controversy; but she was deeply and truly devout. One of her last written testimonies was: "Deeply sensible of my own unworthiness, and profoundly grateful for the innumerable blessings I have received, I trust in the infinite mercy of my Almighty Creator. I have every reason to be thankful that my intellect is still unimpaired; and although my strength is weakness, my daughters support my tottering steps, and by incessant care and help make the infirmities of age so light to me that I am perfectly happy."

Surely Goldsmith's beautiful simile may be applied to this venerable lady,—

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Without pain or illness, she placidly sank and died in her sleep, on the morning of November 29th, 1872. She was buried in the English Campo Santo at Naples. The full history of a life so long and so active would be the history of an age. She had known all the troubles, wars, and political contests of the latter part of the reign of George III.; the Regency; the corrupt reign of George IV.; the better times of King William IV. and his amiable Queen Adelaide, who honoured Mrs. Somerville with kindly appreciation; the accession of Queen

Victoria, our beloved sovereign, whose studious youth had been familiarised with Mrs. Somerville's writings, and whose mental attainments, we know, make her interested in promoting the knowledge of science and literature among all her subjects. Such an indefatigable life, such a genial old age, and such a peaceful death, are the lot of few; but we who can but look with admiration on such talents may emulate and imitate her virtues.

MISS CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. CÆSAR MALAN.

CHAPTER II.

Miss Charlotte Elliott.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

"Here will I watch and wait, and 'wish for day.'
O Rock of Ages! at Thy foot I stay!
Let not the dashing waves unclasp my hold!
Let mercy's arms my trembling form enfold;
And place me where Thy 'hidden ones' repose,
Till the new earth and heaven their charms disclose."

Charlotte Elliott.

THE laws of health are now so much better understood than they formerly were, and all sensible women and girls attend so much more to physical training and open-air exercise, that extreme delicacy of constitution is no longer considered the inevitable inheritance of the female half of the human race. A complex and highly sensitive organization, it is admitted, requires extra care both in understanding and obeying wholesome rules of diet, dress, occupation, and relaxation. The three cheap physicians—water,

air, and exercise—are wisely held in high repute, and employed daily by all who wish to attain or preserve that best of all our heavenly Father's earthly blessings—"a sound mind in a sound body."

Still it is a sad fact that inherited maladies or constitutional defects do fall to the lot of very many of the female sex. The common phrase, which has passed into a motto—"The suffering sex"—may have been, and I think was, intended to apply to the sympathetic mind of woman quite as much as to the body; though it is more generally understood as applying to the latter. It still describes the physical circumstances of great numbers. Life on hard conditions is their lot; and as no chastening in immediate endurance is otherwise than grievous, these dear invalids have the tenderest claims on our ready help and affection. If they are precluded from all activity of either mind or body, the greater responsibility is laid on those around them who possess the blessing of health to cheer and lighten as much as possible the burden of their affliction. This is simply a Christian duty; but like all duties, the more diligently and cheerfully it is performed the sooner it becomes a delight, and brings into the pitying, loving heart of the helpers the blessing of Him who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows."

It is however a remarkable and interesting fact, that from the chambers of sickness and the couch

of suffering have come not only some of the most beautiful examples of cheerful resignation, but of active mental effort. Lessons have been taught so sweet, unselfish, and holy, that they have strengthened the healthy and braced the strong in their contest with the inevitable cares and trials of life.

It was while the poet, Miss Elizabeth Barrett (afterwards Mrs. Browning), was an invalid, carried from bed to sofa for eight years, that she wrote some of the most spiritual of her poems and sonnets. The experiences in the seclusion of her sick room aided the development of her mind and the strengthening of her religious principles. Not books merely, though she was a great scholar, but solitude, suffering, and self-communion matured that fine mind and sublimated that sweet spirit, until she might be said in her sick chamber to have dwelt with God.

A yet more memorable instance of a long life of suffering consecrated to the highest uses, was shown in the case of the sweetest of our modern hymn-writers, Miss Charlotte Elliott. Her life is a true poem in its harmony of thought and action, of example and precept. No startling incidents, no elaborate details, are presented in the very brief (too brief) memoir which a surviving sister gave of her life prefixed to a recent edition of her poems; but the account is all the more instructive, because God led His faithful servant along the quiet, shadowed path, unseen by the world—a path soon

apparently to lead by painful footsteps into the dark valley. But the weary way was winding and very long, and the end was slowly gained, which was a blessing to many. The overshadowing wings that were spread as a shelter for the invalid mercifully concealed the lengthening road, while soft whisperings of angel voices echoed through the sufferer's soul, and the peace that passeth understanding filled her heart.

Thus a life of more than eighty-two years was permitted to one who had from early youth such feeble health, that death was often thought to be impending. Surely in that long sojourn in the outer vestibule of heaven, she must have caught a refrain of its songs and a rich foretaste of its joys.

Miss Charlotte Elliott was born March 18th, 1789, the third daughter of a family that were, at the end of the last century, the centre of a circle known and esteemed for evangelical principles and deep piety. Charles Elliott, Esq., of Clapham and Brighton, was her father; and Mrs. Elliott, her mother, was a daughter of the Rev. Henry Venn, the pious vicar of Huddersfield from 1760 to 1770. The Rev. John Venn, Rector of Clapham, was her uncle. Indeed, the members of the families of the Venns and Elliotts were well known throughout the kingdom as leaders of that evangelistic movement which sought, during the last thirty years of the past century, to revive and cherish pure, simple gospel truth in the teachings of the Church of

England, and to commend religion to the people as a matter of the heart and conscience,—not of forms and ceremonies, but of inward conviction.

Born into such a circle, of course the education of the gifted child Charlotte was carefully attended to, especially in those matters which implant principles and form character. Her literary studies were subject to interruption from her ill health every winter. In the summer months, she rallied, and was able, as childhood merged into youth, to visit friends of the family; and the sweetness of her disposition, accompanied and embellished by the charm of a mind rich in natural gifts, made her very precious to all who knew her.

Early in life her conversation was greatly prized by the limited and select circle who were favoured to enjoy it. Fond of music and poetry, with fine taste, a good memory and active imagination, she must have been a most delightful companion, particularly as she had been surrounded from her earliest years by a home circle whose gifts and attainments made them sought and prized wherever great talents, consecrated by religion to the highest uses, commanded attention or won regard.

If health was denied, yet all the compensations that could be granted in loving companionship and intellectual pursuits were mercifully granted. Still, those only know, to whom the monotony of the sick room is often appointed, how heavy the burden is, and how it presses on those who have to bear

it. Each must bear his own burden, is the earthly sentence on the sick and suffering. Happy those who can cast their care on the Saviour, and realize that He careth for them.

This sweet experience was not gained without an effort, even by so spiritual a nature as Charlotte Elliott. Let none of my young readers think that the careful training of pious parents, the possession of a gentle temper and kindly natural disposition, will be enough in themselves, to secure comfort during the tedious, wearing trials of oft-recurring or long-continued sickness. It needs the special grace of a lively faith in all being ordered by a heavenly Father's love, before the blessing is fully realized that He is near to sustain and comfort, and that in the darkest hour His voice sounds in the depths of the spirit, "It is I; be not afraid." This triumph over bodily affliction is only gained if, and when, it has been earnestly sought; and so we read that there was a time in Charlotte Elliott's early youth when she was not in the full enjoyment of that hope through believing which alone brings peace.

Her opportunities of meeting highly-intellectual people in circles of fashionable life, though often restricted by delicacy of constitution, were yet frequent enough to exercise a great fascination over her mind, and might have led her to prize worldly amusements and intellectual triumphs as a chief good; in which case there must inevitably have followed a bitter sense of hardship and loss, when

she was laid aside and deprived of such amusements and enjoyments. But she was mercifully led to a higher life. With pathetic truth does she say, "He knows, and He alone, what it is, day after day, hour after hour, to fight against bodily feelings of almost overpowering weakness and languor and exhaustion; to resolve, as He enables me to do, not to yield to the slothfulness, the self-indulgence, the depression, the irritability such a body inclines me to indulge; but to rise every morning determined on taking this for my motto: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.'"

It was this spirit of patient endurance and hallowed resignation that aided her to give to all who are passing through deep waters, that perfect hymn,

"Thy will be done."

In the year 1821, during a season of great suffering, she became deeply conscious of sin—a great mental conflict distressed her. Ah, my dear young reader! we must know ourselves to be sinners, before we can turn with full purpose of heart to Christ as a Saviour. The sin-sick soul must know and feel that it is sick, before it hastens to seek the Great Physician. This part of Miss Elliott's experience is of great use to us far less advanced Christians. It was this deep need which developed in her mind those lovely, yearning, submissive thoughts which are expressed in her beautiful hymns.

Dr. Cæsar Malan, of Geneva, on the 9th of May, 1822, came to her aid like a heavenly messenger; as, indeed, all are who bring light, truth, and peace to our souls. His conversation gave her new views of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. That day she kept as the birthday of her soul—a spiritual anniversary ever cherished, as also was the friendship and correspondence with Dr. Malan for a period of forty years.

In the year 1823, many sad bereavements came, especially the death of a beloved sister; and it was resolved by the family to accept an invitation to the Continent, and try an entire change of scene: doubtless with benefit to mind and spirit, but scarcely with any permanent improvement of health to the invalid.

After an interval of some years, in 1834, she formed an acquaintance with Miss Harriet Kiernan, of Dublin, a lady of great mental and spiritual attainments, who came to England for medical advice; which, to the sincere regret of Miss Elliott, proved unavailing, for in less than a year she died of consumption. Intercourse with this like-minded Christian friend led to Miss Charlotte Elliott undertaking the editorship of a little annual volume, "The Christian Remembrancer," which for twenty-five years she carefully prepared and enriched with original contributions, and also with valuable selections.

The profits of this work, which attained a large

circulation, and of her other writings, were employed in aiding the funds of Christian institutions,—such as the Bible Society, and kindred plans of spreading the gospel; while her private benevolence was always active to the utmost extent of, and, as some would think, beyond her means.

It was in 1835 that she wrote the exquisite hymn so justly dear to every humble believer:

"Just as I am, without one plea."

This first appeared, among several others, in a collection of poems intended chiefly for the sick room. With characteristic diffidence, the writer shrunk from being known; and it must have been a hallowed joy to her to find that she was the honoured instrument of impressing, arousing, and comforting many. Her hymn was copied out by several of her friends and correspondents, and sent to her by many who did not know that she was the author. It was speedily translated into French, Italian, German, and may certainly be considered a priceless gem in our rich treasury of devotional lyrics.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Miss Elliott was a most constant and devout Bible student. Passages of Holy Writ form so often the refrain of her poems, that it is easy to see that her mind was constantly filled from the pure fount of Bible truth.

A little passage that she wrote in her own private Bible contains a valuable lesson to all:—

"*Dig deep* into this precious mine,
Toil, and its richest ore is thine:
Search, and the Lord will lend His aid
To strew its wealth from its mystic shade:
Strive, and His Spirit will give the light
To work in the heavenly mine aright.
Pray without ceasing, and in Him confide,
Into all truth His light will guide."

When weakness prevented her attending public worship, she found a sanctuary in God's word: "My Bible is my church," she said. "It is always open, and there is my High Priest, ever waiting to receive me. There I have my confessional, my thanksgiving, my psalms of praise, a field of promises, and a congregation of whom the world is not worthy—prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors; in short, all I can want I there find." What a blessing it is that this rich treasure, so full of blessing to her, is ours also, that the humblest mind may receive a ray from that Divine source of all light and life. Her sister says hers was, to a great extent, "a hidden life,"—hid with Christ in God, we may say. But as the unseen violet is known and tracked by its fragrance, so the breathings of her soul have come to us in her poems, and help to waft our thoughts heavenward. We feel that it was by prayer she lived and sang her sweet strains. We hardly need to be told that she had special seasons of spiritual communion with, and prayer for, absent friends; special times for commending works of faith and labours of love to Him who alone can send the prospering blessing,

and who has revealed Himself as the hearer and answerer of prayer.

Thus passed what, to her surprise, as to that of her many friends, was permitted to be a long life. Many bereavements—that of her beloved brother, Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, and others—came to test, but never to shake her faith. Many furnace fires of suffering refined the pure ore of Christian principle from the dross of earthliness. Many changes to distant lands and to various parts of her own country were dutifully tried, in search of what was never long possessed—alleviation of bodily suffering; yet, amid all, her soul enjoyed a sweet serenity, and she was permitted to reach the ripe age of eighty-two years. On the 22nd of September, 1871, she said, in reply to one who quoted the words, "Let not your heart be troubled," a sweet smile beaming on her brow: "But my heart is *not* troubled"; and then she added, "My mind is full of the Bible." On the evening of that day, at ten o'clock, she sank to sleep so sweetly that those around could not tell the minute when the earthly repose ended and the heavenly rest was won.

"So He giveth His beloved sleep."

CHAPTER III.

Miss Caroline Herschel.

(SOME SISTERS OF MEMORABLE MEN.)

HERE is a hallowed charm in the relationship of sister, when its duties are tenderly felt and faithfully fulfilled. It has often been remarked that young men, who have grown up surrounded by a group of amiable sisters, or even in companionship with only one who possessed a loving heart and gentle mind, are easily known by their superior refinement and their deference to and respect for women. "I knew he must have had nice sisters," is a frequent comment, when the speech and deportment of a young man has led to an inquiry as to his family connections.

I do not say that many a young man has not attained mild, considerate, kindly manners who has never had a sister; but I hold that one of the most

STUDY AND WORK.

refining educational influences is possessed in families where the affection and innocent gaiety of the girls tempers the hardihood and roughness of the boys. The two sexes growing up together in the household do each other good. The sisters gain in frankness, courage, activity, and it may be, in solid intelligence, if the boys are conscientious; while the brothers become more considerate in act and speech, purer and gentler in thought and word and action.

The sweet, strong bond which nature knits at birth between the children of the same parents, nursed at the same bosom, fondled on the same lap, kneeling at the same household altar, ought to be able to defy the changes and vicissitudes of life, although these affect this relationship more than any other. Sons go forth to battle with the world, daughters marry and enter upon other and nearer ties and responsibilities; still the heart cannot be quite right which does not always retain and respond to the first early claims—the associations identified with childhood. Sad is it when the cares of the world obliterate the tender memories of early youth, or the pride of life dries up or diverts the fountains of affection which welled forth in the home of childhood.

To some true hearts this kindred tie, when it has been stretched across wide oceans to far distant lands, has bravely borne the strain, and grown the tighter by the firm clasp with which at each end

it has been held. Multitudes might and do echo the kindly words of Goldsmith—

> "Where'er I roam, whate'er new realms I see,
> My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee;
> Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
> And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

In literary biography there are many memorable sisters of distinguished men. The poet Wordsworth testified as to the softening influence his sister, Miss Deborah Wordsworth, exerted on his mind and manners, and the benefit he derived from her wise criticisms. From his own experience of a relationship that never was interrupted by any newer ties on Miss Wordsworth's part,—for she lived with him until her death, and as long as health permitted, devoted herself to his family,—from tender reverence for this life-long bond of love, so precious in his own case, the poet could deeply appreciate its value; and he said of the quaint essayist and his sister—Charles and Mary Lamb—

> "Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
> Did they together testify of time
> And seasons' difference—a double tree,
> With two collateral stems sprung from one root."

In humble life there have been most worthy instances of sisterly affection, by which the welfare of brothers has been so promoted as to aid them in their upward struggle to a higher position of life.

Catherine Hutton is a memorable case in point. William Hutton, the successful bookseller, and valued historian of the important town of Birmingham, which now shines like a star in the midst of England, passed through as sad an experience of suffering and hardship in childhood as was ever lived through and triumphed over.

At seven years of age the poor child was put to work in a silk-mill, and being too short for his hands to reach the machinery, he was mounted on high pattens to pursue his toil. Seven years of this slavery passed, and then, the boy being out of his time, trade was bad, and he could not get employment. He was again bound for seven years to the stocking weaving, a relative being his master, or rather his tyrant. Taunts and blows were his portion in his second apprenticeship. His mother was dead, and his father drank; one only heart yearned to the motherless boy, and that was his sister Catherine's. The poor boy made an effort to escape from his tyrant, by running away when he was seventeen years of age; and his narrative of his journey,—the loss of his bundle of clothes containing all he had in the world, his sleeping on a butcher's block at night, and his subsequent famished wanderings, is as affecting as any record of American slavery. His brutal uncle was, however, brought to own the value of the lad's services, and promising to treat him better, William returned and served out his time.

In his few, very few, intervals of leisure, and by subtracting from the hours of sleep in summer mornings, William Hutton managed to cultivate his mind; and growing fond of books, he also began a little traffic in them by buying a book for his own reading and then selling it to obtain another. By tact and shrewdness he managed to make a profit out of his little trading. It was well that he did; for on his being out of his time as a stockinger—though he worked two years as a journeyman—trade was bad and employment uncertain, and so he bought himself an old bookbinder's press, and taught himself enough of the art of bookbinding to renovate the shabby and tattered books which alone he had the means to purchase. He took a little shop, and his sister Catherine came to live with him; and with tender gratitude he recounts:—

"I set off at five every Saturday morning, carried a burden of from three pounds weight to thirty, opened shop (or stall) at ten, starved in it all day upon bread and cheese and half a pint of ale, took from one to six shillings, shut up at four, and by trudging through the solitary night and deep roads five hours, I arrived at Nottingham by nine, where I always found a mess of milk porridge by the fire prepared by my invaluable sister."

We can picture the welcome and the smile that greeted the weary, foot-sore man, as he entered his dwelling, and cannot doubt that to his sister's care and kindness it was due that his health and life

were preserved in his hard wrestle with fortune. The tenderness and domestic order of that kind sister kept him from resorting to the public-house, preserved both his health and morals; and he knew and owned in after-life, when he became a thriving and a prosperous man, that his sister had been a true helper, without whose aid he would probably have succumbed to the hardship of his lot.

William Hutton was not merely a prosperous man, he was good in all the various relationships of life, and he lived to extreme old age.

On the publication of his "History of Birmingham," which had a very large circulation, he was elected a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society of Edinburgh. Wealth and honours followed; but in wealth as in poverty he retained a humble, kindly, grateful nature, and always delighted to own his great obligations to his sister Catherine.

Certainly the most memorable case in modern biography of sisterly sympathy and help is furnished in the life of Miss Caroline Herschel, of whom incidental mention has been made in the sketch of Mrs. Mary Somerville. The splendour of the name of Herschel, and the scientific distinctions attained by Sir William, and Sir John his son, might throw into complete shade the early history of the family, and thus prevent us from knowing and being instructed by a very impressive and beautiful domestic history, only that the recent publication of the life

of Miss Herschel* throws the quiet light of home on the narrative of the scientific progress of her distinguished relatives.

In the garrison school at Hanover, from 1739 to 1755, there were a group of pupils ranging from the age of two to fourteen, the elder boys of whom were noted for their talents, particularly in music. Jacob, William, and John had all been well instructed at home in that art by their father, a musician in the Guards' band. But this good father's plans for the education of his family were much hindered by his ill health. He was a martyr to asthma and rheumatism, owing to the hardships he had endured in war-time with the army. But his children were a great compensation. The eldest, Sophia, went away to reside with a family, where she married early a musician named Griesbach; and the three elder boys soon obtained employment—Jacob as an organist, and William and John in the band. Their brightness rather threw into the shade the fifth child of the family, Caroline, a little, quiet, plain-looking girl. By her own account, she was not much cared for in the busy household, some of whom—the eldest sister and brother—were certainly selfish and exacting. But there was one brother, William, to whom the little Caroline always firmly attached herself with all the strength of a loving heart, sadly repressed in its demonstrations. William had always

* "Memoir and Correspondence of Caroline Herschel." By Mrs. John Herschel.

a kind look and word for his little sister, which fell on her heart like dew upon a drooping flower.

There was a younger child than Caroline, who completed the family group, Alexander, a fine boy, the care of whom fell to the lot of the sister five years his elder.

Never was there a harder worked child than Caroline Herschel. She had to do the actual drudgery of the house, and in her life calls herself "Cinderella,"—running errands, nursing the baby, washing up after meals, mending the clothes, filled all the time that she was not at the garrison school, which of course, with all the enforced punctuality of a German child, she attended. It is affecting to read such statements as the following, of her early recollections. The incident occurred before she was seven years of age, and her father was returning home after an absence:—

"My mother being very busy preparing dinner, had suffered me to go alone to the parade to meet my father, but I could not find him anywhere, nor anybody whom I knew; so at last, when nearly frozen to death, I came home and found them all at table. My dear brother William threw down his knife and fork, and ran to welcome me, and crouched down to me, which made me forget all my grievances. The rest were so happy at seeing one another again, that my absence had never been perceived."

In another place she says, "I was mostly, when not in school, sent with Alexander to play on the

walls, or with the neighbours' children, in which I seldom could join; and often stood freezing on the shore to see my brother skating till he chose to go home. In short, there was no one who cared anything about me."

A sad testimony. This doubtless had the effect of concentrating her affection on the one brother who did care something for her. Her father, too, she always remembered with great tenderness, for he perceived some talent in the child, and taught her a little music and singing, — not with his wife's concurrence. Mrs. Herschel was a toil-worn mother, wearied with her necessary household tasks. She saw that her eldest daughter's education had not made her helpful, but the reverse; that her elder sons' talents were likely to cause them, as they did, to leave their native land in search of a wider sphere; therefore she was resolute to prevent little Caroline having any but the humblest and plainest instruction—what the school laws prescribed, and no more.

Thus there was the greatest impediment to Caroline's mental progress which could possibly exist. A child—a daughter especially—is so influenced by a mother's feelings and prejudices, that it is one of the marvels which real life supplies, more strangely than fiction can do, that this little hard-worked household drudge should have ever emerged from the gloom of her early condition. This it is which makes her life so valuable; what she was, quite as

much as what she did, is a rich legacy of instruction to all. This little girl, who was to become the greatest female astronomer of the age, was a capital knitter, and records that she knitted a pair of stockings for one of her brothers, which when done were as long as she was high.

The departure of the two eldest brothers for England on a musical tour was the next important event in the family. This was followed by the death of the good father, to the deep grief of his wife and children, to whom he left "little more than the heritage of a good example, unblemished character, and those musical talents, which he had so carefully educated, and by which he probably hoped the more gifted of his sons would attain to eminence."

The little Caroline was thrown, as she says, into a "state of stupefaction" for many weeks after this bereavement. All hope of intellectual improvement seemed now closed to her. She went for a short time to learn millinery and dressmaking, but this was not continued long. She returned to her household duties, and the toiling mother was constant at her spinning-wheel, while the sons were gaining great reputation in England, particularly at Bath, where William was mostly resident.

It should be noted that from William's earliest years he had shown not merely musical talent, but a great mechanical and inventive faculty. His mind had a wide range, and he could study lan-

guages and mathematics, and yet train his hands to skill in mechanics. He was never idle, but always acquiring; indeed, idleness was unknown in the family, though some were more diligent and far more unselfish than others.

Thus some years passed on, until Caroline was twenty-two, when there came a letter from her brother William, proposing that she should join him at Bath. He remembered her voice and singing, and thought by his instruction he might make her useful for his winter concerts at Bath. She was to return to Hanover, if on trial she did not succeed. Her eldest brother Jacob, who, as she said, had never heard her voice except in speaking, turned the whole scheme into ridicule. But stimulated by the hope of doing something to aid her brother and gain a living for herself, she began to study, practise, and prepare herself. Meanwhile, in the expectation of going away, she knitted as many cotton stockings for her mother and youngest brother "as would last two years at least."

In the August of 1772, her brother William came to see his mother, and take Caroline to England. She says, "My mother had consented to my going with him, and the anguish of my leaving her was somewhat alleviated by my brother settling a small annuity on her, by which she would be able to keep an attendant to supply my place."

What a journey she had to England! In these days, the cheapest train and steamer take a pas-

senger to the Continent in comfort in a few hours; then, Miss Herchel travelled six days and nights in an open *postwagen,* and then embarked at Helvoetsluys, on a stormy sea, to the packet-boat, two miles distant; and she and her brother were, she says, "thrown on shore by the English sailors like balls, at Yarmouth, for the vessel was almost a wreck, without a main and another of the masts."

Her troubles were not over on landing; for after a hasty breakfast, brother and sister mounted some sort of cart, to take them to the place where the London coach passed. They were upset into a ditch, fortunately dry, and came off with only a fright; some kind fellow-passengers, who accompanied them to London, helping them.

Poor Caroline entered the metropolis bareheaded, having lost her hat, amid her other troubles of the way. The landlady of the inn in the city lent her a bonnet, and thus equipped, she made one short excursion, to see something of the metropolis. Curiously enough, among all the fine shops she noticed only one with an interested and longing gaze—it was an optician's. But they could not linger. That same night saw them on the way to Bath, where they arrived, she says, "almost annihilated, having been only twice in bed during their twelve days' journey."

It must have been a strange new life to the little German girl at Bath. Her brother William was organist at the Octagon chapel, director of the

public concerts, and as a teacher of music he had a large circle of pupils from the first families. All his professional work was, however, with him but means to an end. Every moment of leisure that he could snatch by day from his musical pursuits, and every hour that he could subtract from his sleep at night, were devoted to those astronomical studies to which, by the strong workings of natural genius, he was impelled with a force he had no power or wish to resist.

From the quietude of her retired home, and the monotonous music of her mother's spinning-wheel and her own knitting needles, Caroline was plunged at once into a life of ceaseless activity. She had a purpose quite as strong as her brother's, and that was—to be in all things possible, and some that seemed impossible, his devoted helper. It is said of her, that for ten years she persevered by night and day, "singing when she was told to sing, copying when she was told to copy, lending a hand in the workshop (where her brother manufactured his telescopes), and taking her full share in all the stirring and exciting changes by which the musician ultimately became the king's astronomer and a celebrity."

Besides all these unusual duties, she kept her brother's house, and had a full share of trouble with inefficient and wasteful servants, whose extravagance shocked her thrifty habits and harassed her temper. Yet she never says anything of her own exertions or privations in that arduous time of toil,

and only recalled them to her nephew in after-days, "to show," as she said, "with what miserable assistance your father made shift to obtain the means of exploring the heavens." Every one but herself would call it most invaluable assistance, every power of her body and mind being devoted to him.

At breakfast times, upon her first arrival, her brother gave her some lessons in English and arithmetic. "By way of relaxation, we talked of astronomy, and the bright constellations with which I had made acquaintance during the fine nights we had spent on the *postwagen*, travelling through Holland." In this desultory way she began the studies in which she ultimately excelled. Had she chosen, there is little doubt she might have had great success as a public singer; but her brother's tastes and pursuits were hers, and no excitement of praise, or hope of emolument, ever interfered with her steady resolve to work for and with him.

The difficulties, fatigues, and dangers of her brother's experiments and first mechanical contrivances were almost innumerable. There was then no optician resident in Bath, and the toil of making tubes for telescopes, polishing mirrors, procuring or inventing tools, took up all the time that could be spared from music. Indeed, Caroline had to watch her brother, and almost put the food in his mouth, so that his health might not suffer by his mind being so absorbed in his scientific pursuits.

As far as a wide reading of biography enables

me to judge, I think there is no record of such hard, various, and continued study and work as that which was performed by this remarkable woman. Her brother's career was extraordinary, but he had the advantage of a good, sound, early education, and habits of study fostered by his father's approbation. Caroline had merely been able to gather the crumbs of knowledge that fell around her in her childhood's home, and to devour them in secrecy and fright, being far more likely to have blame than praise. All the deficiencies of her *early mental* training she had now to make up, as well as to pursue tasks wholly unusual to her sex. At night she watched the heavens with her brother, regardless of, yet not without feeling, cold and weariness. Once, on a bitter December night, she records, that in making some alteration in the machinery of the telescope, she slipped on the snowy ground, and was impaled on an iron hook. "My brother's call, 'Make haste,' I could only answer by a pitiful cry, 'I am hooked.' He and the workman were instantly with me; but they could not lift me without leaving nearly two ounces of my flesh behind. The workman's wife was called, but was afraid to do anything; and I was obliged to be my own surgeon, by applying aquabusade (water bandages) and tying kerchiefs about it for some days." The wound was bad for a long time; and a physician told her that had a soldier met with such a hurt he would have been entitled to six weeks' nursing in hospital.

The astronomical discoveries of her brother attracted the attention of the scientific world, and led to George III., his Queen, and the Princesses taking an interest in the astronomer. Royal patronage, and still more, his own strong desire, determined William Herschel to devote himself entirely to his astronomical studies. The brother and sister played and sung professionally for the last time on Whit-Sunday, 1782, at St. Margaret's Chapel, Bath, the anthem for the day being a composition of William Herschel.

The honours which came to the brother were by no means remunerative. He gave up his pupils and musical career at Bath, which had enabled him to spend a large amount of money on scientific instrument and experiments. His salary, when he was appointed Royal Astronomer, was but £200 a year! Well might Sir William Watson say, "Never bought monarch honour so cheap."

This stipend would not have paid the rent of the new Observatory and the expenses of frequent journeys to and fro to the king and queen at Windsor, but for the astronomer's success in making telescopes for sale. He was compelled to pursue this mechanical branch, or he could not have continued his observations of the heavens.

His sister, finding she must qualify herself as assistant astronomer, learned to use the telescope, and, as she called it, "sweep the heavens," in which she soon acquired great skill. In her brother's absences from home, she, to use her own

quaint phrase, "Minded the heavens," and with such success that her watching was rewarded in a very wonderful way. On the 1st of August, 1786, she discovered a comet; and, her brother being abroad, she with characteristic promptitude wrote on the following morning an account of her discovery to two eminent men, Dr. Blagden and Alex. Aubert, Esq., who in a few days congratulated her warmly, the latter saying, "You have immortalized your name; and you deserve such a reward from the Being who has ordered all these things to move as we find them, for your assiduity in the business of astronomy, and for your love for so celebrated and deserving a brother."

From this time, Miss Caroline Herschel became what, in her humility, she never desired to be—a celebrity. She rather shrunk from any praise of herself, as if it was taken from her brother. He was to her as the sun, and she merely a shadow called up by his brightness. Surely, it was an absurd and exaggerated humility in her to say, "I did nothing for my brother but what a well-trained puppy-dog would have done. I was a mere tool, which he had the trouble of sharpening."

All the thoughtful people of her own time, and still more since the narrative of her life has been given to the world, will not take her own estimate of herself. She achieved individual, quite as much as relative greatness.

Space will not permit me to follow the career of

Miss Herschel as an astronomer, except to remind my young readers that she did not allow herself to become less diligent as she grew more celebrated. A real love of science for its own sake, and not for any praise, still less for pecuniary advantage, possessed and ennobled her mind. She had the small salary of fifty pounds a year awarded her as assistant astronomer, and this was continued as a pension in her old age.

Her discovery of the first comet was followed by that of seven or eight others. After her brother's marriage, which took place late in his life to a very amiable lady, Miss Herschel removed to a small residence near him, and continued to sit up with him in his observatory, note down his observations, and make necessary and difficult calculations for him. She was greatly delighted, with what may be called an almost maternal joy, when a son of that beloved brother was placed in her arms—that son who lived to nobly inherit his father's genius, and uphold and extend the fame of the honoured name of Herschel.

Of course as celebrity came to her she was sought out by the wealthy and distinguished; but whether in the courtly sphere of royalty, or among the *elite* of fashionable and scientific circles, she always retained the unaffected simplicity of her manners, delighting all by her friendliness and entire freedom from assumption. She was a true gentlewoman in heart and manners, thinking always of others rather than of herself.

Miss Herschel reached the age of seventy, and was still toiling on at her celestial studies, when her brother, Sir William, died, full of years and honours, aged eighty-two. She mourned him with an intensity of sorrow that seemed like the uprooting of her own heart. She felt that she could not live in England now he was gone, and went home to her native land to die. It was not exactly a wise determination. The resolutions we take in sorrow, or in any strong emotion, are more the result of excited feeling than calm judgment; and so it was in this case. The country she returned to, after nearly fifty years' absence, was not at all like the place she had left, or that youthful memory had retained in her mind. All her immediate acquaintance and most of her kinsfolk were gone, or came to her as strangers. She left the most cultured circle in England to find neither companionship for her heart or her mind. Yet deep as the disappointment must have been, she did not say much about it; for at first she thought her life would not last long, and after that she grew more accustomed to the change. Her correspondence with her nephew, Sir John Herschel, to whom she transferred the love she had borne his father, that nephew's success in his scientific career, the letters and tributes she received from eminent people throughout England and the world, and the respect with which she was treated by all at Hanover, from the king and his family, with whom she was a great favourite, to

the more accessible circles of intellectual society—all these gradually reconciled her to her residence, and made it less a state of exile.

Moreover, her sincere and cheerful piety sustained her, as year followed year and found her yet remaining, still taking an interest in all that was going on in the scientific world, and deeply sympathising in the greater advantages of education that were coming within the reach of her own sex. She deplored what she thought (and not without reason) the extravagance in modern attire among women. Her own modest income of £50 a year, to which her nephew insisted, against her remonstrance, on adding another £50, was always sufficient for her wants, although she visited and received the visits of royalty. A single maid-servant conducted her frugal household arrangements in her simple apartments; and thus in all the dignity of simplicity and independence her life went on, until it almost seemed as if death had forgotten her.

Sir John Herschel's visit to the Cape (1834), to make astronomical observations, interested her greatly. She was amused when the astronomical societies of England and Dublin elected her a member, and awarded her a medal. She could not believe she had done anything very great, or indeed at all worthy of being called great; and she said, quaintly enough, "To think of their electing me, when I have not discovered a comet for eighteen years!"

She lived to within nearly two years of a hundred. In anticipation of her death, she had long before composed her epitaph, and left memorials to her nephew and a few relatives, and her books and telescopes to friends and learned Societies.

She retained her faculties unclouded, and her will strong and active to the last. It was winter when the end came, and she had reluctantly to keep her bed, but was free from pain, and able to raise herself and converse.

The guns which announced the birth of a child in the royal family struck on her dying ear; she was told the cause. The departing one expressed hopes for the new pilgrim, and then fell gently asleep. With scarcely a struggle, she entered into rest on the 9th of January, 1848. She was buried beside her father and mother, and her tomb bears the following inscription:—

HERE RESTS THE EARTHLY EXTERIOR OF

CAROLINE HERSCHEL,

BORN AT HANOVER, MARCH 16TH, 1750,

DIED JANY. 9TH, 1848.

The eyes of her who is glorified were here below turned to the starry heavens. Her own discoveries of comets, and her participation in the immortal labours of her brother, William Herschel, bear witness of this to future ages.

Arrival at Sligo Barracks

CHAPTER IV.

Miss Elizabeth Smith.

SELF-CULTURE.

THE excellent systems of teaching in the present day so smooth the steep hill of difficulty to the young seeker after knowledge, that it is sometimes thought there is no great need of saying much *now* about self-training and culture. Every facility is afforded to learners, and the assumption is that all learn readily, and that allusions to and examples of what was in former times very justly called "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties" are now no longer needed.

While rejoicing heartily that the difficulties in the way of school instruction are removed, that elementary knowledge is insisted on for all, and that culture in the higher branches of attainment

is generally accessible, I yet think that there is some danger—it may be great danger—that the young will depend too much on what is done *for* them, and think too little of what, if they are to be really cultivated and intelligent women, *must* be done *by* them. No system of instruction can possibly supersede thoughtful effort and diligent attention in the pupil, or compensate for wise application of attainments when girlhood merges into womanhood.

There is a sense, and a very important sense too, in which every one who really is well-informed must be self-taught. Instruction given is one thing, instruction received another. No plans of education can supersede or supply a substitute for the faculty of attention and the practice of diligence. What the young mind desires and resolves to do for itself is of the utmost importance to that mind. Instruction may stream on and over the mind like water over a mirror, and make no abiding-place in it.

In the times gone by, people were rather to be pitied than blamed if they were ignorant. "Ignorance of what they could not know" was not culpable. But now, with all the facilities which schools and libraries afford, ignorance is a disgrace which every right-minded young person should resolutely avoid. When darkness prevailed, none were to blame for not seeing; but to be voluntarily dark amid the blaze of day, that is indeed culpable. It is the awful

realization of the solemn words: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Hence it is a salutary exercise to look back on former times, and refresh our minds and stimulate our faculties with the records and experience of those who have had to cope with hardships no longer existing, and whose mental and moral triumphs over difficulties remain as an example to all thoughtful readers.

Few young women in any age or country were more successful in acquiring knowledge, or more modest, conscientious, and judicious in its use, than Miss Elizabeth Smith, the Oriental scholar, and the translator of the Book of Job; and readers are more drawn to the consideration of her acquirements from the fact that her Christian character was even more lofty than her remarkable mind.

There is not much to record in her uneventful, brief, yet beautiful life. Some sorrows came to test her principles and show her sweet sympathy and calm fortitude.

In the year 1793, times were very hard in England. The French Revolution had startled the whole civilized world. War was rampant, opinions were conflicting, property was insecure, taxation high, trade and commerce much depressed. It was not wonderful that the moneyed interest should suffer, and many banks broke. One in the West of England, of which a Mr. Smith was the leading partner, failed; and the blow that shattered the

dwelling may be said to have let in light, by which we plainly see a most interesting family circle.

The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was sixteen years of age—just able to enjoy and estimate the elegancies and comforts that were lost. The blow fell suddenly—for, in such crises, failures are often the result of the difficulties of others, and become beyond individual control—and the family at Piercefield were looking forward, not unreasonably, to building a new house, and to years of prosperity and domestic happiness.

Fortunately, Mrs. Smith, the mother in that home, was a woman of great good sense as well as refinement. She had not been domesticated in one residence for any long period of her married life. She resided at Burnhall, the seat of her ancestors, near Durham, when Elizabeth, her eldest daughter, was born, in 1776. Thence the family removed to Suffolk for a time, and afterwards lived at Piercefield, or Bath. Mrs. Smith was her children's first instructress, and was equally surprised and delighted both at the quickness and attention of little Elizabeth. She was a docile, rather shy child, very lovely in person, and gentle in temper.

A young lady, Miss Hunt, an orphan, only some seventeen years of age, was taken by Mrs. Smith as a governess to her little family, and from her Elizabeth received all the regular instruction that was ever bestowed on her. The young governess was kind and good, and tolerably clever; but her

pupil Elizabeth was what every wise teacher wishes to have—a learner; and her progress, particularly in languages, was surprising. By the time she was thirteen, she had surpassed her governess in attainments.

I observe, too, from her letters* that she compelled herself to studies that she did not like so well as languages. Many a girl will devote herself to what comes easy and pleasant to her, but avoids what tasks her intellect. Arithmetic and mathematical studies were not favourite pursuits with Elizabeth; but she overcame her reluctance, not from any parental command, but because she was impressed with the value of solid studies, and the duty of cultivating her mind in all branches which she had an opportunity of acquiring.

Elizabeth was but fifteen when, by the removal of this first and only governess, the instruction of her younger sisters and brothers devolved on her. No doubt this use of her education had long been thought of by her. Mrs. Smith's health grew delicate, and the good daughter had early learned to be her mother's helper. Her fingers were skilful on the piano, but they were as active and as skilled in making and mending her own and the younger children's clothes. She was one of those —may their numbers ever increase—who thought all acquirements and accomplishments should be so used as to promote domestic order and social

* Mrs. H. M. Bowdler's account of Miss Elizabeth Smith.

comfort and refined pursuits. Hence there was no selfishness in her motives.

By early rising, she had time for her reading of the poets, English, German, and Italian, as well as superintending the lessons of the younger children. How much depends on the eldest daughter in a home! How she may become a sweet companion for the leisure hours of her father, a ready helper in household matters to her mother, a tender and wise friend to her younger brothers and sisters, a loving and beloved assistant to all!

This wise discipline of early life, when there was no fear of any change of social position, undoubtedly fitted Elizabeth for the altered circumstances that came to her just as womanhood was opening before her.

Of course there must have been grief and perplexity for her father and mother, but there never was a murmur from herself. She became more cheerful and active than before, so as to lighten the cares of others. The younger children clung to her with increased affection, for she was ever ready to teach or to play with them, and to supply, as far as she could, every want of the attendance they had been used to, and to teach them by her own example to be gentle and helpful.

For some time the family were absolutely without a home of their own. The kindness of friends was shown by offers of hospitality, and the family visited among intimates and connections until some-

thing could be settled on for them. Elizabeth, amid all these interruptions, kept up her own studies and gave constant help to her mother with the younger branches of the family.

Mr. Smith obtained a commission and entered the army. This, in Elizabeth's seventeenth year, necessitated their removal to Ireland. Her father joined his regiment at Sligo, and his family went to him. Mrs. Smith, in a letter to Dr. Randolph, says :—

"Books are not light of carriage, and the blow which deprived us of Piercefield deprived us of a library also. But though this period of her (Eliza's) life (while with the regiment in Ireland) afforded little opportunity for improvement in science, the qualities of her heart never appeared in a more amiable light. Through all the inconveniences which attended our situation while living in barracks, the firmness and cheerful resignation of her mind made me blush for the tear which too frequently trembled in my eye at the recollection of the comforts we had lost."

On their first arrival in Ireland, in the summer of 1796, they passed some time as guests at the Earl of Kingston's residence, and went from thence to join Captain Smith at Sligo. Although it was summer, the weather was very wet, and the family seem to have had a wretched journey, and found that no comforts awaited them at their quarters in the Sligo barracks. In a letter to a friend, Eliza-

beth says, "We were all completely wet through when we arrived, and had everything to unpack, and beds to contrive and arrange." She adds, "we are all very well and much amused with the little misfortunes that happen to us."

It is wonderful to think of her cheerfulness; for Mrs. Smith, in a letter on the same subject, says, "We arrived at the barracks, dripping wet. Our baggage not come, and, owing to the negligence of the quarter-master, there was not even a bed to rest on. The whole furniture of our apartments consisted of a piece of a cart-wheel for a fender, a bit of iron for a poker, a dirty deal table, and three wooden-bottomed chairs. It was the first time we had joined the regiment; and I was standing by the fire meditating on our forlorn state, and perhaps dwelling too much on the comforts I had lost, when I was roused from my reverie by Elizabeth exclaiming, 'Oh, what a blessing!'

"'Blessing!' I replied; 'there seems none left.'

"'Indeed there is, dear mother; for see, here is a little cupboard.'

"I dried my tears, and endeavoured to learn fortitude from my daughter."

That lovely and gifted daughter immediately set to work to make a meal for the family, and to put the little cupboard to use for holding necessaries; and with characteristic ingenuity and good humour, she contrived a little luxurious surprise for the

family by making them a currant tart. What a treasure was her activity and unfailing good humour! Not that she did not feel the change of circumstances, for with her thoughtful mind and tender heart she must have felt deeply; but she was intent on lightening the burden for the rest, and in this found her own soul comforted.

I have said she was a good needlewoman, and her own dress and that of the family depended almost entirely on her skill and taste. It was remarked of her, when she was grown up and mixed in the small but very cultivated circle of her friends, that her taste was so correct, no lady could be more elegantly and yet more simply dressed. Economy and neatness were both combined with taste and refinement, an equal avoidance of finery and shabbiness, which I think my judicious young readers will esteem the perfection of good sense in dress for those whose means are limited.

Although there were many interruptions and impediments to the studies that she loved during her residence in Ireland, and Elizabeth could not obtain the books she wished for, yet she made good use of such as fell in her way. Some Greek and Latin works especially came within reach, and she employed her brief leisure, or rather, by her habits of economizing time and rising early, made leisure to use these books in helping her to obtain classical knowledge.

From Ireland, the family returned to Bath, and

here she resumed her Hebrew and her German studies, having access to books that helped her. She seems to have pursued her student course alone, as regards tuition, being her own tutor, but not without admiring encouragement from her family and friends. There were found among her papers the following reflections, written on the day of her coming of age :—

"Being now arrived at what is called years of discretion, and looking back on my past life with shame and confusion, when I recollect the many advantages I have had, and the bad use I have made of them, the hours I have squandered, and the opportunities of improvement I have neglected; when I imagine what with those advantages I ought to be, and find myself what I am, I am resolved to endeavour to be more careful for the future, if the future be granted me; to try to make amends for past negligence by employing every moment I can command to some good purpose; to endeavour to acquire all the little knowledge that human nature is capable of on earth, but to let the Word of God be my chief study, and all others subservient to it. To model myself, as far as I am able, according to the gospel of Christ; to be content while my trial lasts; and when it is finished, to rejoice, trusting in the merits of my Redeemer. I have written these resolutions to stand as a witness against me, in case I should be inclined to forget them, and to return to my former indolence and

thoughtlessness, because I have found the inutility of mental determinations. May God give me strength to keep them ! "

The prayer with which this resolve concludes shows the source to which alone she looked for strength and grace. Resolutions made in our own strength only are never likely to produce the results we wish. They are evanescent, like the morning cloud and early dew.

Captain Smith's stay with his regiment was prolonged for some years; and his family at length were settled in a little retreat at Coniston, in a very beautiful region, since become celebrated not only for its great natural beauties, but for the many eminent literary people who have taken up their residence within the lake district, and have made its scenery ever memorable.

From the time that Elizabeth began to study Hebrew, she devoted herself to the examination of, and to translations from, the Holy Scriptures. This indeed was her motive in entering on a course of study not common now, and very uncommon then, among women. She was eminently a Bible student, and the work of her life, which honourably ranks her among contributors to the literature of her time, was her translation of the Book of Job—a very ambitious effort for a young and self-taught woman.

Rev. Dr. Magee, of Trinity College, known then as a great Hebraist and authority in Biblical criticism,

wrote of Elizabeth Smith's translation: "After a close scrutiny and a careful comparison with the original, it strikes me as conveying more of the true character and meaning of the Hebrew, with fewer departures from the idiom of the English than any other translation whatever that we possess. It combines accuracy of style, and unites critical research with familiar exposition."

This work was finished in 1803. She occupied herself also, while at Coniston, with making translations from the German of Klopstock,* chiefly letters and papers of the illustrious German devotional poet, and his congenial-minded wife; and it was said of her success in clothing the German author in an English dress:—"Klopstock, under her management, talks English as well as his native tongue; and the warmest of his admirers would rejoice to hear the facility and precision with which she has taught their favourite poet and philosopher to converse amongst us."

Her acquaintance with eminent poetical writings, and more especially with so sublime a work as the Book of Job, gave her a distaste for her own original poetic compositions. She felt their inferiority to the models which had formed her taste, and therefore, to the regret of many friends, ceased to exercise her pen in that way. As there is no subject, on which even sensible people so often deceive themselves, as on that of their own powers of poetic writings,

* Author of "The Messiah," etc.

it shows us both the humility and the sound judgment of this young lady, that she early came to the conclusion, that while she had poetic feeling and fine taste, she had not in a high degree the gift of poetic expression.

It is pleasant to think that the last two years of this sweet life were passed amid scenery that she loved, and that her health, until a few months before her lamented death, was perfect. She made many sketching excursions, and returned exhilarated from the long walks to many beautiful scenes, which her skilful and ready pencil had transferred to her sketch-book. The commencement of her illness is given by herself :—

"One very hot evening in July I took a book and walked about two miles from home, where I seated myself on a stone beside the lake. Being much engaged by a poem I was reading, I did not perceive that the sun was gone down, and was succeeded by a very heavy dew, till in a moment I felt struck on the chest as if with a sharp knife. I returned home, but said nothing of the pain. The next day being also very hot, and every one busy in the hayfield, I thought I would take a rake and work very hard to produce perspiration, in the hope that it might remove the pain, but it did not."

From that time a bad cough and frequent loss of voice alarmed her family. In the autumn, as she became worse, she was removed to a milder climate, and reached the house of a friend at Gloucester.

Thence she was taken to Finsbury, where she stayed five months. Afterwards, in May, Dr. Baillie of London recommended Matlock; but, as she did not improve, and confirmed consumption had set in, at her earnest desire she returned to Coniston, and on reaching her pretty cottage home, she said, "If I cannot live here, I am sure I can nowhere else."

Here, in a few weeks, the end drew near, but the gentle sufferer was so serenely calm and unmurmuring, that no one but her mother thought her so ill as she really was. Nor did she herself anticipate so sudden a release as she experienced. But she was, by faith in Jesus, always ready, and never depressed. On the night of the 7th August, 1806, she became very exhausted and somewhat restless. She would not let her mother sit up with her, fearing the fatigue would be injurious to her. An old and faithful servant was with the sufferer early in the morning, and yielded to her wish to get up and be dressed. While this was being done, a slight tremor shook Elizabeth's feeble frame; she leaned her head on the attendant's shoulder, and with a gentle sigh the spirit fled to join its kindred among the just made perfect. Surely there was infinite mercy in such an easy dismissal to one so prepared!

One lesson of humility from her own private meditations deserves to be remembered by all young readers; to the highly gifted it is the most

applicable—"The more talents and good qualities we have received, the more humble we ought to be, because we have the less merit in doing right."

She was buried at Hawkeshead, where a white marble tablet is inscribed:—

In Memory of
ELIZABETH,
Eldest Daughter of George Smith,
Of Coniston, Esq.
She died August the 7th, aged 29.
she possessed great talents,
exalted virtues,
and humble piety.

CHAPTER V.

AMELIA PIE.

AN ONLY DAUGHTER.

THERE are few conditions of life more abounding both in responsibilities and temptations than that of an only daughter, called at an early age, by the death of her mother, to take that mother's vacant place and superintend her father's house. She has to be his earthly consoler, his duteous child, and the careful manager of his domestic affairs, just after they have been wrecked or shattered by a heavy blow. It must be her study to prevent her father from having to mourn over a ruined home, as well as a departed wife.

"Poor thing! she has lost her mother when she needed her care most," is the frequent remark when a young maiden is thus left,—left, just as childhood is merging into womanhood, and all the varied difficulties, mistakes, and peculiar trials of youth have to be encountered by the motherless girl. Every feeling heart must be interested in one so situated;

AMELIA OPIE.

Amelia at the Norwich Assizes

every Christian spirit will be ready to breathe a prayer for, and give gentle counsel to, a daughter so bereaved.

Yet among the sweet examples which rise to our observation or memory, if we are thoughtful seekers for excellence, we shall find many an instance, among high and low, of a daughter taking her mother's place—showing her tender love for the departed, not so much by tears and grief as by trying to fulfil every duty, and seeking to compensate the home for the loss of the wife and mother, who, if worthy of those names, was the central light of the dwelling.

In many a humble home, the family have had to cling to some elder sister, who seemed to have put off her childhood at her mother's grave; and, while the tears were still wet upon her cheeks, has begun to set the house in order, to tend the children, to pay extra attention to the head of the family, and in a thousand ways to prevent the father from being utterly crushed by his trouble. God's blessing is on all such efforts of affection! The effort is indeed twice blessed—to the youthful mind that makes it, and to the home it is made for. Many a thoughtless girl has been developed into a noble woman by such a discipline of sorrow.

But the temptations of youth are much increased in the case of an only daughter whose father is in that position in life which belongs to a superior station. A professional man, whether doctor or

lawyer, is not able to leave the locality in which he lives in search of the consolation of travel; he must remain among his patients or clients. He may have household arrangements which cannot, without utter discomfiture, be altered; and if, being the father of an only daughter, he has no near female relative of mature years to undertake the management of his domestic affairs, he is committed either to an upper servant, or to the plan of putting his child at the head of his house and confiding to her youth a charge which demands a thoughtful care scarcely to be expected in early years. Happy the man whose daughter in such an exigency shows herself equal to the task of filling her mother's place in his home and heart.

In the year 1784, Dr. Alderson, an eminent physician of Norwich, lost his wife, and was left with an only daughter, Amelia, aged fifteen. This young lady at once became her father's housekeeper as well as companion. She was gifted with so many advantages of person and mind that her childhood had attracted the attention of all who knew her. Fair and blooming, with a smiling face and beaming eyes, perfect health, great vivacity, a sweet voice, and frank charming manners, she seemed the very embodiment of the poet's ideal of joyous youth.

Great attention had been paid to her education, and very uncommon advantages of intellectual culture had been bestowed. A Flemish pastor, the

Rev. John Bruckner, settled in Norwich when Amelia Alderson was seven years of age, and he gave her instruction in the French language, and also in some solid branches of acquirement then much neglected in female education. She had great love of, and some skill in, music—particularly singing. Added to this was a mind active to acquire and tenacious to retain knowledge, with an imagination so graceful, and a love of poetry so great, that its youthful possessor was in danger of living too much in an ideal world, for her gifts were just those which need the utmost discretion in their culture and use.

This first grief—the loss of her mother—checked the exuberance of her spirits, and called her reflective faculties into exercise. That dear mother had been wise and firm, as well as tender in the management of her gifted child, who had the good sense and gratitude to remember her admonitions and reproofs, as thankfully as the more indulgent and pleasant evidences of her affection. In a sweet poem to her mother's memory, written some years after her death, Amelia says :—

"Oh how I mourned my heedless youth
Thy watchful care repaid so ill;
Yet joyed to think some words of truth
Sunk in my soul and teach me still;
Like lamps along life's fearful way,
To me, at times, those truths have shone;
And oft when snares around me lay,
That light has made my danger known.

Then how thy grateful child has blest
Each wise reproof thy accents bore!
And now she longs, in worlds of rest,
To dwell with thee for evermore."

It is not wonderful that this lovely girl, brought into society when young people of her age were in the schoolroom, should have been much admired and sought after. A vain or romantic girl would have been ruined by so much praise; a cold-hearted and selfish one would have taken it as her right, and sought only her own pleasure; but this young lady had two great preservatives—her deep love for her father, and her conscientious desire to act as her pious mother, if living, would have approved.

She had not then, nor for some years afterwards, the guidance of that unerring light which religious conviction gives to the soul! but wise early training had its influence, and she sought and loved the society of the good and intellectual. Her earliest friend, on whom she relied for advice, to whom she gave her confidence, was Mrs. John Taylor, a lady distinguished among the then very cultivated society of Norwich, for her many excellences of mind and character. Nothing is so important to the young as the friendships they form. The common proverb contains a volume of wisdom: "Tell me your company, and I will tell you your manners."

Dr. Alderson was intimate with most of those memorable Norwich families whose names have gained a world-wide celebrity. The Taylors, the

Martineaus, the Gurneys, and, later on, Bishop Stanley and his family. In such a circle, there was everything to stimulate the development of mind and give a bias to genius; and the young mistress of Dr. Alderson's house was soon as distinguished among her intellectual friends for her talents, as she was beloved for the sweetness of her temper and disposition.

Although she did not apparently contemplate becoming an authoress, it was known by her intimate friends that she had a gift of poetic expression; and many sweet stanzas and some charming songs of her composition were circulated among her friends. In after-years she was destined to be known and celebrated as a writer both in prose and verse, of works admirable for purity, pathos, and sound morality. In an age when woman's genius has gained great triumphs in the highest departments of literature, some of the poems of Amelia Opie have retained their place as true expressions of genius. And one is just now, in this time of war and carnage, singularly touching:—

THE ORPHAN BOY.

Stay, lady, stay, for mercy's sake,
And hear a helpless orphan's tale,
Ah! sure my looks must pity wake,
'Tis want that makes my cheek so pale.
Yet I was once a mother's pride,
And my brave father's hope and joy;
But in the Nile's proud fight he died,
And I am now an orphan boy.

Poor foolish child! how pleased was I
When news of Nelson's victory came,
Along the crowded streets to fly,
And see the lighted windows flame!
To force me home my mother sought,
She could not bear to see my joy;
For with my father's life 'twas bought,
And made me a poor orphan boy.

The people's shouts were long and loud,
My mother, shuddering, closed her ears;
"Rejoice! rejoice!" still cried the crowd;
My mother answered with her tears.
"Why are you crying thus," said I,
"While others laugh and shout with joy?"
She kissed me—and with such a sigh!
She called me her poor orphan boy.

"What is an orphan boy?" I cried,
As in her face I looked, and smiled;
My mother through her tears replied,
"You'll know too soon, ill-fated child!"
And now they've tolled my mother's knell,
And I'm no more a parent's joy;
O lady, I have learned too well
What 'tis to be an orphan boy!

Oh! were I by your bounty fed!
Nay, gentle lady, do not chide—
Trust me, I mean to earn my bread;
The sailor's orphan boy has pride.
Lady, you weep!—ha?—this to me?
You'll give me clothing, food, employ?
Look down, dear parents! look, and see
Your happy, happy, orphan boy!

One of the occupations of her childhood was so unusual that it excites astonishment. The coming

of the judges and the opening of the law-courts at the assizes, of course was, and is, the periodical excitement of a provincial city. All the children in Norwich—from the noisy urchins who throng the streets, to the little curled darlings who are dressed and taken out to witness the ceremonial of the judges' arrival, or the procession of the municipal authorities who escort the judicial dignitaries to the cathedral—were then, as now, delighted at the ceremonial and the show, the bustle and the life of the scene. Very few, probably, ever think deeply respecting the people to be tried, or feel much curiosity about the solemn proceedings of a court of justice; but the young Amelia, from a very early age, was full of interest and excitement about the trials, and was allowed to go—not to the criminal trials, but to the *nisi prius* court—and hear the pleadings and witness the proceedings, which she did with an absorbed attention, making her own mental comments, and finding her love of truth greatly shocked by the contradictions, prevarications, and carelessness of witnesses.

The deep attention and intelligent look of this young observer attracted the attention of many eminent legal men; and, to her own surprise at the time, and her amusement as she recalled it in after-years, she was noticed and talked to by learned judges, and her attendance was looked for with indulgent interest.

She was from early childhood a remarkably good

reader; and it is probable, as the bar has always been considered a school of oratory, that this, in the first place, both excited her attention and induced her father to permit her to gratify her wish of attending the trials.

Some years after, a near relative of hers became one of our most eminent judges—Baron Alderson—which must have been a great gratification to such a lover of forensic eloquence and legal distinction as was our heroine from her youth up.

Naturally, a young lady so much her own mistress and so admired, mingling in the most fashionable circles of a gay and wealthy city, would early receive those attentions which some young girls think the crowning distinction of early womanhood. But with all her warmth of feeling and fancy, Miss Alderson was not one of those young ladies who think it inevitable that, as soon as they are grown up, they should fall in love. She loved her father so fondly that she wished to devote her life to him; and so her first youth passed away, and left her

> "In maiden meditation—
> Fancy free."

She had paid many visits to London, and was known as a writer of great promise before her heart was troubled, or blessed, with any emotion that equalled her filial love.

In the year 1781–2, there was in London an artist, whose genius excited the utmost admiration, not unmingled with surprise, named Opie, who had been

brought from his native Cornwall, where his youthful genius had burst through all the impediments of a humble station, a very limited education, and a life of toil. Dr. Walcot, when visiting Cornwall, saw some pictures by a self-taught artist which arrested his attention. He was told the name, circumstances, and age of the painter, and he set off to find him. Opie was working in a saw-pit, when he was called out to answer the question, "Can you paint?" and the reply he gave was both rustic and ready, "Oh, yes; I can pe'aint a farmyard, and King George." The interview ended in the youth accompanying Dr. Walcot to London, where, by diligent study and ceaseless industry supplementing his natural genius, he became not merely a rustic wonder to be stared at, patronized, and then neglected by aristocratic idlers, but a winner of a foremost place among the most gifted artists of the age.

It was, however, in 1797, a great surprise to many circles that the beautiful and gifted Amelia Alderson should have accepted the man whom Allan Cunningham calls an "inspired peasant." She was gay, fond of and shining in society, and visited in the highest circles. He was grave, fond of retirement, rather eccentric in conversation, and devoted to his noble art. In looks and manners, they were a contrast to each other; but some contrasts harmonize admirably. The solid worth and true genius of Opie which had raised him to eminence, won her esteem and regard, and her high

estimate of a wife's duties made her in all respects an admirable help-meet.

New duties and new trials both came to her, for an artist's life often abounds in cares and reverses; and Opie, though an admired and successful painter, was not without many anxieties, and had a hard struggle for some years to keep the eminence he had attained.

It was at this time that Mrs. Opie's pen was most active, and she wrote some stories that were greatly estimated for their moral excellence and literary beauty. She displayed a great knowledge of the human—the female—heart, its strength and its weakness; and the tenderness of her own nature made her excel in pathetic descriptions.

"Father and Daughter," and "Tales of the Heart," have retained their place among the purest works of fiction; while her story, "White Lies," had a great popularity, as useful to that large class of thoughtless young people who let their tongues run on, without caring to be accurate in what they say, doing often an immense amount of mischief by carelessly mixing up truth and falsehood, heedless of consequences. Would that all would ponder those capital lines of the Poet Laureate—

"A lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies;
A lie which is all a lie may be met and fought outright;
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

Nine years of happy wedded life ended in widowhood, and Mrs. Opie returned to her beloved father's

house and her native city as a permanent resident. Dr. Alderson lived to a good old age, cheered by the duteous attendance of his devoted daughter, who at length was left, by his death, alone in the world, a childless widow.

It was during her early widowhood that her mind underwent a change on the most important of all subjects—vital religion. Hitherto she had lived, as thousands of amiable people are content to do, without any deep thought or faithful searchings of heart, as to the real condition of her soul. Content merely with a name to live, and not feeling herself a sinner, and looking to Jesus as the only Saviour.

Ah, my dear young reader! multitudes are satisfied to pass through the daily round of their simple duties, and think they have done all that is required of them, if they are amiable and kindly, and avoid all flagrant offences against the moral law. Lulled by self-complacency into a sense of security, they cast aside all serious thought, all salutary fear, as to their spiritual state. The answer to the solemn demand, "Give Me thy heart," has never been made. Prayer has been merely a daily formula, perhaps endeared by memories of childhood, or sentimentally practised as a salutary habit. The real supplicatory spirit, the intense yearning for communion with God in Christ, as an ever-present Guide, Saviour, and Comforter, has never been realized.

In this important matter, a great change occurred

in the experience of Mrs. Opie. She had been intimate from her youth with the family at Earlham Hall. Elizabeth Fry, and one of her sisters, Priscilla Gurney—who seems to have been by all testimonies a true embodiment of spiritual and mental excellence—commended spiritual religion to her conscience. Correspondence with them brought serious subjects prominently before the mind of Mrs. Opie, and the ministrations and letters of Joseph John Gurney, led her to deep reflection on religion. She left the Presbyterian (or Unitarian?) connection into which she had been born, and after due—indeed long deliberation—united with the Society of Friends.

The name of the section of the Church of Christ with which she united, is very secondary to the fact that she became a devout Christian; and that one of the first efforts of her awakened soul was to lead her beloved father, as Apollos of old was led, into the way of truth more perfectly. A prayer that she wrote down on this subject is so beautiful that I recommend it to my young readers:—

"O Thou, 'the God that hearest prayer,' and, even amidst innumerable choirs of angels for ever glorifying Thee and hymning Thy praise, canst hearken to the softest breathings of a supplicating and wretched heart; deign, Lord, to let the prayers of a child for a beloved parent come up before Thee. In grateful return for that life he gave me here, and which, under Thy good providence, he has tenderly watched

over, and tried to render happy, enable me, O Lord! to be the humble means of leading him to Thee. Oh, let us thirst, and come together to the waters; and 'buy wine and milk without money and without price;' and grant, O Lord! that before we go hence and are no more seen of men, our united voices may ascend to Thee in praises and blessings! Grant that we may together call upon the name of Him who has redeemed us by His most precious blood, that in that blood our manifold sins may be washed away." *

Mrs. Opie was ever charitable to the very utmost of her means, but deepening religious convictions gave a wider sphere and a wiser purpose to her benevolence. Her loving heart seemed ever like a temple of peace and hope, where all gentle and generous thoughts prompted to deeds of benevolence and mercy.

She made, in her later years, many excursions to the Continent and to different portions of the United Kingdom, kept up her literary intercourse and the exercise of her pen, but thought it suitable to give up writing fiction,—a decision which tells more for her honest fidelity to her convictions, than to the clearness of her reasoning power. Such fiction as she wrote was Truth exemplified—principles embodied and wrought out—and thus brought home to many minds not otherwise accessible. Multitudes of writers of the most enlightened Christian convic-

* Life of Amelia Opie, by Lucy Brightwell.

tions, in our time, wisely use the outward vehicle of fiction to convey the deepest truths of social life, and believe that imagination, like every good gift, was bestowed to be used, and consecrated in its use. However, let us honour a conscientious scruple in a great writer, even though it hampered her powers and impeded her influence.

Her age was beautiful and dignified. Every good cause received her aid—prominently the Anti-slavery Society, and the advancement of education: nor were the claims of the animal world neglected—man's faithful dumb companions and servants. In a time when animal wrongs and sufferings were too often ignored, she ever showed and taught mercy as a Christian duty.

Thus, amid her many elevated pursuits the years passed calmly on. She built a house for herself at Norwich, on Castle Hill, close to the old fortress she had known from earliest years, and amid the scenes she loved. The inevitably painful experience of advancing age—that of the loss of early friends—tried her affectionate heart; but she was so loving, that she was sure to win love from a generation succeeding those with whom she had set out in life. Miss Lucy Brightwell, her friend and biographer, and others paid her the tender attention of friendship as her infirmities increased.

She was last in London at the Great Exhibition in 1851; and, in common with many noble spirits, hailed the "rich dawn of an ampler day," in hope

that "fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace" would hasten the coming of the time when men should learn war no more. Sweet and holy anticipations! not as yet realized, but sure to come; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Mrs. Opie had become lame, but otherwise time had dealt gently with her. The beaming sweetness of her countenance remained to testify of peace within, and so, by gentle gradations, the end drew near. But her dismissal was not to be without a struggle. Her bodily sufferings for the last six weeks were severe, but were borne with all the pious, chastened resignation of a Christian. Amid great pain and weakness, she said to her cousin, "All is peace;" and afterwards to Mr. S. Gurney, "All is mercy." Brief, yet comprehensive testimony, rich in all the fulness of the gospel of Christ!

On the 2nd of December, 1853, she closed her long and valuable life, leaving not only her writings to delight, but her example to instruct, her countrywomen.

CHAPTER VI.

SARAH MARTIN AND THE LAST DUCHESS OF GORDON.

LOWLY AND LOFTY LESSONS.

"One in Christ." "Rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all."

IT must be a source of rejoicing to every reflective mind that examples of devoted lives may be selected from the most widely different spheres of social life. Faith in Christ, consecration of the heart, and devotion to the work He gives His faithful ones to do, is the strong bond of union that links together the lowly and the lofty who are His. Nor are we to suppose, as many young people of the middle ranks are apt to do, that the path of the rich and noble is always comparatively smooth when they are led to think of religion, and to resolve to set out as spiritual pilgrims on the narrow way that leads to life eternal. Often, in proportion to the splendour of station is the amount of tempta-

THE LAST DUCHESS OF GORDON:
MISS BRODIE REPROVED BY A LITTLE CHILD.

tion and hindrance. Loftiness of social position is frequently a stern limitation to freedom of action.

Yet, as in all things the Christian can come off conqueror through Him that helpeth him, many examples are found in modern biography of women whose social *status* has exhibited the greatest possible contrast, yet whose personal experience and life-work have plainly shown the oneness of their hope, and the true spiritual kinship of all believers.

I propose giving my young readers a brief sketch of two lives, taken from entirely different classes of society, each of which teaches them a most valuable lesson for time and eternity. I select that noble Christian lady, the last DUCHESS OF GORDON, and the humble seamstress and pious philanthropist, SARAH MARTIN, of Great Yarmouth.

I take the last first. In the early years of the present century, a young girl might be seen at Yarmouth going to and from her work as a dressmaker's apprentice. There was nothing remarkable in her appearance, except perhaps a look of keen observation and intelligent thoughtfulness. She was an orphan, and had been reared by an aged, pious widow, her grandmother. Some schooling had been given her, and she was fond of reading in a desultory way.

It is rather a curious fact in the mental history of the orphan Sarah Martin, that she had a positive dislike to religion and the books that inculcated it,

the Bible especially. Many young people are indifferent, or mere formalists in the matter of religion; but I think very few indeed can charge themselves with so strong a feeling as dislike.

At the time when Sarah Martin was a school-girl, the Bible was often made a lesson or a punishment book; and but little was done to make its truths attractive or clear to the minds of the young. Pictorial aids, sweet narratives, poetic elucidations, and interesting questions were rarely used—never, I may say, in the ordinary schools of the time; so that the Scriptures seemed like a sandy desert, and young feet soon grew weary in traversing it. But our gracious Lord does not leave Himself without a witness, where there is a thinking mind. Frivolity and the love of pleasure are the thorns that most frequently choke the good seed of wisdom and truth.

At the age of nineteen, Sarah heard a sermon that impressed her, from the words: "Knowing the terrors of the law, we persuade men." This was a ray of light to her, but the dawn came slowly. It was however a great matter that, with the growing light, she was able to see herself as she was—a sinner. She began to read the Bible and examine for herself; but with at first no other result than great self-condemnation, and some confusion of mind from theological books. But as she beautifully says in her simple memoir,* "Seeing salvation, not in

* Life of Sarah Martin, p. 9. Religious Tract Society.

its commencement only, but from first to last to be entirely of grace, I was made free; and looking upon a once crucified, but now glorified Saviour, with no more power of my own than the praying thief had upon the cross, I also found peace."

This change of heart was followed, as, when real, it ever is, by a change of life. She began not only to search, but to love and rejoice in the Scriptures. The Bible was the companion of her leisure hours, and its precepts the guide of her actions. She was conscious that her former hardness of heart and dislike of religion had been a trial to the beloved aged parent who had protected her orphan childhood; and we can imagine the joy there was between the widow and the orphan when they were one in the faith and the hope of the gospel.

"Did you ever despair of my conversion?" she asked of her aged guardian.

"No; I always prayed for you, my child," was the reply.

Ah, dear readers, what constant, hallowed incense of prayer is rising from loving hearts for many of you! Long ere you could pray for yourselves, long after you have wilfully neglected prayer, the supplications have been and are continued. Think of it, and give your pious kindred the greatest joy that you can afford them, the sweet assurance that their prayers are answered.

It was quite in accordance with the true spirit of Christianity, that as soon as Sarah Martin's heart

was right she should wish to be useful to others. Christianity is an active principle—swift, cheering, and vivifying as light.

She began, as many of our best young people begin to work for their Master, by teaching in the Sunday School. Here she found ready access to the hearts of the children of her class, and through them to their parents. Some memorable conversions through her instrumentality followed.

Then she had a strong desire to visit the poor in the workhouse. Her wish was granted; and here, too, she had almost immediate evidence that she was in the path of duty. District visitations, Bible classes and readings, home missionary activities, are all more modern plans of usefulness which existed not then; and the sight to the sick and aged poor of a kind young face bending in pity over them, and a gentle voice pleading with them and reading to them, must have been as a revelation of Heaven to many whose hold on earth had been painful and wearisome.

In the workhouse, Sarah Martin's first work was found. She did not confine her ministrations merely to the aged and the sick. She very wisely sought to do good to the children, then more likely to be trained for crime than for anything else, in our pauper houses. Any man who could read, and perhaps write a little, was selected from among the paupers as schoolmaster, irrespective of character and fitness. Of three, whom she in the course of

years came in contact with at the workhouse, two were drunkards, and one was a thief! With her clear mind and sympathising heart, she pitied both the teachers and the taught, and strove, not in vain, to do them all good.

But her special life-work commenced in 1819, when she was about twenty-six years of age. She then gained admission to the prison. Here her plans were most practical. She set herself to shut out indolence, that seducer to crime, and her skill as a seamstress gave her great help in teaching the women and girls. She learned straw-plaiting and the making of bread seals, much used then, and some other occupations, so as to instruct the men in the prison. She knew that all reformation is but transitory that does not touch the heart and give some light to the soul; so in much diffidence, yet with devout resolution, she began to give some religious instruction. She read the Scriptures on the Sunday, and taught and encouraged the prisoners to read, and instituted and conducted for them a devotional service, there being there then no gaol chaplain.

Meanwhile, of course her business, on which she depended for bread, suffered. She gave up one entire working day in the week to teaching industrial pursuits in the prison. A lady paid her for another day, as if she were at work at dress-making, so that she might devote herself more fully to these waifs and strays of humanity. Then

she set on foot plans to preserve the prisoners, on their release, from the temptations of drunkenness and idleness, and was the means of reclaiming many from the ranks of crime to tread the path of honesty.

The Sabbath day of course was hers to spend, as the Lord appointed, in doing good to the souls of men. In her case we see what a blessed institution the Lord's-day is; how it affords to the world-weary and the criminal a means of spiritual refreshment and enlightenment; how the Christian, who has to toil for the bread that perisheth, may on this day break the bread of life, and rescue, from the hard grip of worldly business, time to do and to get good. Oh, dear young reader, cherish your Sabbaths!

Twenty-three years of continued usefulness were permitted to this devoted woman. For the first half of these her services were unnoticed by any of the influential of the earth. She did them to the Lord—that was enough for her. Fees, reward, or praise, she never sought. Of course she had the inward recompense of an approving conscience; and the sweet tribute came to her of the tear of repentance, the smile of humble gratitude, and the blessing of those who were ready to perish.

But at length public sympathy was aroused. Inspectors of prisons and town councillors were startled into attention to her methods of reformation. The prison and its inmates were so altered,

they could not but notice it. Her simple history and humble means became known and honoured. She was compelled—reluctantly on her part—to receive some acknowledgment, and the sum of twelve pounds a year was forced on her acceptance, which, with the interest of some three hundred pounds that she inherited on her grandmother's death, comprised her means of livelihood.

Very touching and sweet were the little addresses which she composed for the prisoners, and also for the workhouse children. Always warm from the heart, and vital with her own experience, were her teachings, and that made her so successful in winning souls from Satan's dominion.

Never of robust health, her constitution became seriously impaired; and from April, 1843, to the October of that year, she became the tenant of a sick room, prostrated by a painful illness, from which, after much suffering, she was released by death. Her pen, during intervals of her pain, was used when she could no longer speak to those for whom she had laboured; she wrote affectionately to them, and one address she prepared to be read to them the Sunday after her death.

Her own summary is the best close to this sketch: "In the absence of all human sufficiency on my part, whether of money or influence or experience, it is plain that God alone inclined my heart, instructed me by His Word, and carried me forward in hope and peace. Hence arises the boundless

encouragement which it presents to others; for the most humble individual may, in any department of the providence of God, build on the promises as firm as eternity. 'Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.' Yes; for grace will prompt the prayer, and make it in accordance with the Divine mind and will."

We are differently led; and such a work as Sarah Martin did is not appointed to many; but all workers in the Lord's vineyard can emulate her self-sacrifice, her diligence, her faith, her love, and thus live blessing and blessed.

Elizabeth, Duchess of Gordon,

was descended from the noble Scottish family of Brodie. Her mother died when she was six years of age. Two maiden aunts at Elgin then took charge of her, and though motherless, she had a happy, healthy, mirthful childhood. She was removed for education to a boarding-school near London; and without anything in her career out of the ordinary course of a young lady of her rank, she made progress in all that she was taught, and grew up dignified in person and graceful in manners.

Her father seems to have been careful to instil

humility into her mind; and she seems always to have remembered, as well as recorded in her journal, his saying, "If I did all I ought to do, I should still be an unprofitable servant."

At nineteen, Miss Brodie was introduced into society, and was speedily much admired. She seems to have mingled with a gay circle, who thought that, if they gave a sort of patronage to religion by attendance at church in the morning, they might spend the evening in pleasure—even at cards! A reproof that sank deep came to this young lady from a very unexpected quarter. She was very fond of children, and a beautiful child of three or four years old being in the house she was visiting, she amused herself by playing with the little creature and winning its love. One day, however, when she called to her little playfellow, the child would not come, but turned away, saying,—"No; you are bad—you play cards on Sunday." Struck to the heart by this admonition, she replied sadly, "I was wrong; I will not do it again;" and she resolutely kept her word. Who can say but that one little seed of truth, wafted on an infant's breath, sunk deep into the recesses of her mind to spring up vigorously in after-days.

In 1813, she married the Marquis of Huntly, and for many years her life resembled that of other merely fashionable people. She was not blessed with children; and she, and her lord, who was many years her senior, travelled much on the

Continent, and saw the brilliant life of many great cities, as well as that of London and Edinburgh.

This lady lived to record that her career was unprofitable and idle. She was not happy in this state. There was a latent perception that life was given for a higher purpose than dressing and visiting, laughing and talking—that under the thin veil of pleasure there lurked selfishness and vice—and her moral sense was aroused. In her distress, she sought refuge in her Bible,—that fortress for the weary soul—that asylum for the sin-sick spirit. The Scriptures soon became to her—what they are to every earnest student—a guide through the labyrinth of the world.

One day she was found by gay companions reading the Bible, and they ventured to ridicule her, and spread a report that the Marchioness of Huntly had turned Methodist. The weapon of ridicule, while it alarms the weak, is often a useful goad to arouse the strong. Lady Huntly was not a person to be laughed out of her convictions. More than ever she resolved to persevere in a new endeavour to attain a higher life than she had yet lived, and grace was given her to begin to work for God and man with a zeal that never wearied.

At Kimbolton Castle her entire change in the mode of employing her time was first known among her circle. Lady Olivia Sparrow, of pious memory, became her friend, and some few like-minded women of rank were her companions.

In 1827, the old Duke of Gordon died, and Lord and Lady Huntly came from Geneva to take possession of Gordon Castle. Lady Huntly was thirty-three years of age when she became Duchess of Gordon. Her distinguished rank only deepened her sense of responsibility. She had felt the burden of sin, and the sweet sense of release from that burden by being enabled to cast it off at the feet of Jesus; and nothing was stronger, as a distinct purpose with her, than to live by faith and prayer a life of usefulness. With this purpose kept steadily in view, her coronet did not so much ennoble her, as she added a lustre to it.

Of course she had her difficulties and seasons of depression, for her piety was likely to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Once, when somewhat low-spirited, it is recorded in her life, she was visiting a ruined old castle on the Gordon estates, and saw some stone letters over a fire-place that none of the company could read. She pensively lingered after the rest, when on a sudden a sunbeam streamed through the hall, and she read in its light the words taken from an old version of the Bible: "To THAES THAT LOVE GOD ALL THINGS VIRKIS TO THE BEST." She recorded, "It was a message from the Lord to my soul, and came to me with such power that I went on my way rejoicing."*

She resolved, as far as lay within her own pro-

* Life of the last Duchess of Gordon. By Rev. A. Moody Stuart.

vince, to regulate her house in the fear of the Lord. Her discretion and sweetness prevented her pious plans from annoying the duke, who did not then see as she saw; but instead of his being estranged, his affections were increased, for he knew that lofty principle guided her actions. When calamities came—as a fire that destroyed one wing of Gordon Castle, and a great flood that not only devastated the duke's property but injured his poorer tenantry —he said in his grief, "I have been unfortunate in everything except a good wife."

The establishment of schools on her estate was the first work of benevolence on which the duchess entered. In these she took deep interest, visiting them herself and questioning the children, the infant school especially. A pretty incident is recorded of a visit once made to the latter. She took a bright little boy on her lap, and put the question to the children who gathered round her knees, "What does Jesus mean where He says, 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?'" Nothing is harder sometimes (even to far elder folks than were listening to the duchess) than a definition, and therefore it is not surprising that she failed to get an answer. Turning to the child on her lap, she repeated the question; and he said, "A little child kens (knows) that it can do naething its lane" (alone, or of itself). It certainly was a beautiful exposition, never to be forgotten by the noble lady who once again heard

from the lips of a child a blessed truth: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He perfecteth praise."

The losses of property recorded, rather limited the Duchess of Gordon's liberality; and her visitations and benefactions to the poor, her schools, and other charities taxed her personal resources to their full extent. In the spring of 1835, while the family were out at dinner, her jewel chest was stolen from their town house in Belgrave Square. Scarcely any but the plainest of her ornaments was left her. Her comment on this was, "My treasure is where thieves do not break through and steal."

Queen Adelaide, who was a personal friend, sympathising in her loss, sent her a handsome present of her own favourite jewels—a gift valued for the spirit of the giver, more than for any other worth.

In 1836, the Duchess of Gordon became a widow. She had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing that change of heart in her beloved husband which is the Christian's greatest consolation in bereavement. Her faithfulness was thus recompensed, and her deep sorrow sanctified.

Removing to her dower house, Huntly Lodge, henceforth her life and fortune were devoted to extending the Saviour's kingdom. Her work in founding schools was followed by building places of worship. To this end, when she had not money to give, she devoted relics of former splendour. A gold vase, worth £1,200 was so dedicated. Then,

in process of time, her jewels were again thus given. In former years she had recorded, "The duke allowed me to sell £600 worth of diamonds, quaintly saying 'that stones were much prettier in a chapel wall than around one's neck.'"

Now that she had no one to consult but her own will, she cheerfully laid her ornaments on the altar of benevolence and piety.

On the disruption of the Church of Scotland, on the subject of State patronage, the Duchess of Gordon took a most decided course. It is impossible to do anything like justice in this brief sketch to so important a subject as the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland. It is enough to record that, faithful to her convictions, the Duchess of Gordon helped forward what she believed to be the right. It was a trial—a loss to her—to be obliged to differ from many whom she loved and esteemed; but we have seen enough of her character to know that she would not confer with flesh and blood, or be deterred by any worldly considerations in treading what she deemed the path of duty. Her course was resolute, and her name will ever be venerated among those faithful ministers of the Kirk, who were willing to encounter the loss of all earthly benefits, so that the purity of the Church, in their belief, might be promoted.

Of course, for years there was turmoil and great searchings of heart; but yet, living among her

schools and cottages, and doing her works of kindliness, this honoured lady was kept in perfect peace.

A severe illness in January, 1861, from which she recovered, was felt as a premonition of the end. She diligently began from that time to set her house in order; comforting her heart by thinking of others, and devising good to the hundreds of children in her schools and to their parents.

Her last illness was rather sudden, and it does not seem that she was aware of its alarming character; but her life had long been a preparation for death. Holy living is what we should emulate, and leave the dying testimony to shape itself as the Lord directs.

On Sunday evening, the 31st of January, in her seventieth year, she closed her eyes on this world, to open them in the land of the blest; realizing the words of her favourite hymn, on the last words of Rutherford :—

"The sands of time are sinking;
The dawn of heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for—
The fair sweet morn, awakes.
Dark, dark, hath been the midnight,
But the dayspring is at hand;
And glory, glory dwelleth
In our Immanuel's land."

CHAPTER VII.

MISSES JANE AND ANNE TAYLOR (MRS. GILBERT).

HERE are two poems—sweet true poems, though written for infant lips—made, like the flowers, to delight all minds, and which are probably more familiar to millions of readers than any other verses in our language. They are—"My mother," by Anne Taylor; and "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," by her sister Jane.

These sisters were members of a sweet, congenial, united family, nearly unique in the annals of literature. They inherited from a line of ancestors, distinguished in a far nobler sense than by mere worldly rank, acute and penetrating intellect, energy and decision of character, accompanied by great self-control and perseverance. These are the quali-

ties which, under the Divine blessing, lead to eminence.

In the year 1781, a young married couple, aged respectively 23 and 22, set up their first home in lodgings at Islington. Their marriage dower consisted of love and faith towards God and each other, superior intelligence, and habits of industry and frugality. Isaac Taylor, the husband, was an engraver, with no other certain income than half a guinea a week for three days' work, weekly provided for him by his elder brother, who was afterwards known as "the learned editor of Calmet's Dictionary." This income, with thirty pounds in hand, and a hundred pounds in stock possessed by Mrs. Taylor, and furniture enough for their two pleasant rooms, comprised their pecuniary means for starting in life. Both these young people were endowed with those distinctive qualities which we call a character. Both were sincerely religious, showing forth their principles in their daily life.

In January, 1782, Anne, their gifted eldest child, was born. A year and nine months after, September, 1783, Jane, destined to be so well known and loved, was added to the household. A removal had taken place from what then was a rural suburb of London, to Red Lion Street, Holborn, and here their first son, who did not survive childhood, was given to them.

If the father had now to toil very hard to maintain his family, the mother's exertions were quite as great. She never allowed herself any recreation,

and might have broken down both her mind and body in mere household drudgery, had not a friend wisely and kindly advised her ever to strive to be her husband's *companion* in higher things. This advice she so firmly acted on that she commenced a practice of reading aloud to him daily, which was of the utmost mental benefit and pleasure not only to herself but to her young family. She became that rare thing then—and not too common now—a good reader, and exercised her mind on intellectual topics suggested by her reading.

Some threatening of ill health, and the expense of rearing a family in London, determined Mr. Taylor to take a very resolute step, and remove himself and family into the country. After many inquiries, a spacious old-fashioned house and good garden were found at Lavenham, in Suffolk, for six pounds a year! No such dwelling could be found now for treble that price. Here, far from all ordinary postal or coach communication, amid humble, kindly, sensible neighbours, and in wholesome retirement, began a system of domestic living and home instruction for the children, which, whether judged by its immediate or after results, must be pronounced as admirable as it was uncommon.

Mr. Taylor, whose Christian zeal was most earnest, set up a Sunday School for the poor children of the place—about the time when Mr. Raikes of Gloucester began the great work there, which has led to

such wonderful results. Sunday School work led to his giving addresses, which were prized by the parents and others; and so, without intending anything but Christian usefulness to his neighbours, he almost unconsciously became a preacher of the gospel. Evidently he was one of those called of God, and led by a way he had not anticipated into the Christian ministry.

In 1848, Anne (then Mrs. Gilbert) wrote in the *Sunday School Magazine* an account of her father's beginning a Sabbath School sixty years previously.

Mrs. Taylor had with very great reluctance, amounting to anguish, consented to the removal of the family to the country. Soon the garden and rural beauty around "won her heart." She lived fully to assent to the words of one of her daughters, that it was "a happy seclusion." Here the children, the sisters especially, made their own amusements. Jane asked to have a brick pig-sty (!) given to her, which she cleared out for a house, and here the study and the play of the two little girls went on most joyfully. The finding out occupations for themselves, and a certain independence in the selection of pursuits, aided by great activity, made them very happy children.

Mr. Taylor pursued his profession as an engraver, having continuous employment from London, which of course he had occasionally to visit. Except at these absences, the children were the companions of their parents; they listened to their mother's

reading aloud, picked up subjects of thought and conversation, and were thus being educated in the best sense of intelligent yet deferential familiarity; good manners, kindly feelings, and useful arts were all gained in that happy household.

The family had to mourn some losses of infant members; but one brother was born at Lavenham, whose name holds an honoured place in the best literature of this age: Isaac Taylor, the author of a long list of most valuable and suggestive books.

The times between 1789 and 1795 were hard, in every sense. Provisions were dear, taxation high, labour ill remunerated, and persecution, both religious and political, rampant. In such a time the fine arts could not flourish, nor could a Dissenter, however mild and blameless his life, escape insult and danger from an ignorant and excited populace.

Mr. Taylor had gained great mastery in his profession, and during some part of the time he resided at Lavenham obtained large sums for his engravings, some of which became celebrated; one in particular, from Opie's historical picture of the murder of David Rizzio.

But troubles came. A dangerous illness brought the dear father to the brink of the grave; and the anxious wife and mother, always of an extremely sensitive, tender nature, was worn to a shadow by her incessant cares, even though she knew better than most where to go for strength. It is not promised that the Lord's people shall escape trials;

many of the very best have to struggle on "through great tribulation." But help comes to them in the struggle. Mr. Taylor recovered, and his ministrations were so valued, that his spiritual teaching was sought after and spoken of far beyond Lavenham. The Independent Church at Colchester gave him an invitation, which he accepted; the family leaving their Lavenham home with sincere regret, but yet as a call of duty.

Anne and Jane were respectively fourteen and thirteen when they went to reside at Colchester. Quiet, observant, graceful girls, very merry among themselves, yet with those bashful, retiring manners not so much seen now as in former times.

They had already begun to use their pens; and they neglected no opportunity of improvement which came in their way among a more extended circle of young friends; always being careful to form friendships with the best companions.

In study, in a full share of household duties, in the care and teaching of their younger brothers, superintended in all things by their admirable parents, their first years at Colchester were passed. One indulgence they had—which, in their own estimation, they considered was a valuable aid in the formation of their mental and spiritual characters—a little separate study for each. It might be, and was, but a slip from an attic chamber, a lumber closet cleared out, or a recess partitioned off; but each of the girls and boys, as they could use it, had respectively

this kind of retiring-place of their own. How much of individuality and thoughtful habit was doubtless promoted by this plan! In "Home Education"* this opportunity of seclusion is insisted on as most essential to the growth of a reflective character.

During this time, as indeed always, Mrs. Taylor may be called the governess, and her husband the tutor, of the family. The latter, carefully reflecting on the difficulties of the times, resolved to give his daughters knowledge of an art by which they could gain their own living if he were taken from them. So, in 1797, when Anne was sixteen, the father brought the girls into his workshop (studio we should now call it) and taught them drawing and engraving. Art education for girls was then not thought of; but the father in this household was a man beyond his age in many things, and his gifted daughters amply recompensed by their progress the pains he took with them.

No apprentices could work more continuously than did Anne and Jane with their graving tools and etching needles. They had an hour for dinner, half an hour for tea, and when the evening hour of release came, and they were free to follow their own pursuits, the time seemed so short which they had for reading or composition, that they acquired, during all that time of year when daylight aided them, the valuable habit of early rising.

The faculty of verse was soon manifested by both

* By Isaac Taylor.

sisters, and greatly delighted in by them; but the higher gift of poetic feeling and perception of the beautiful in nature, in human life, and in art, was also theirs. Anne was the first that ventured into print; some stanzas in "The Minor's Pocket Book" induced her to attempt something of the kind. A prize of six copies of the work was offered for some rhymed solutions of enigma or charade. She wrote what was required, under the name of "Juvenilia," and had the joy—a secret pleasure then—to find she was successful. To this little work she continued to contribute for some years, afterwards became its editor, and only gave it up on her marriage.

Children's books were then very rare, and very poorly executed. Dr. Watts seemed to have no successor in teaching great truths in simple language to the young. Messrs. Darton and Harvey were then the publishers of children's books, and the writings of "Juvenilia," and afterwards of the same contributor under the name of "Clara," attracted their attention. Some plates for their juvenile works were executed by the sisters Anne and Jane, and an offer was made them, in 1800, to exercise their talents in writing for the young.

Never were youthful aspirants more fitted for the sweet and important work of giving instruction to the opening mind. They had feeling, fancy, tenderness, piety; and thus the joint work began, which, as "Original Poems for Infant Minds," was to enjoy such a well-deserved popularity, and to remain

unsurpassed, after three-quarters of a century eminent for its literary activity and excellence.

It is characteristic that the sisters—though well knowing, by its want, the worth of money—were comparatively indifferent to pecuniary recompense. The delight of composition, the joy of finding they were doing good to the young, and the approval of many contemporaries, whose name and fame they had admired, without ever thinking they should know and be known by them, was a priceless recompense.

The "Hymns for Infant Minds" was a still higher effort of genius. Recognised as among the best writers for the young, from the time of its publication and great success, constant literary work was engaged in by both the sisters. It was a beautiful trait that each esteemed the other better than herself. No such feeling as rivalry was at all possible in such lovely natures, so elevated by grace and truth. Somehow, the world was led to ascribe rather the higher attributes to Jane. It arose from their supposing many of her sister's best poems to be hers. But in a careful analysis it would be very difficult—and surely where each is so *excellent*, needless—to assign any superiority. The elder was permitted to live out a long and most complete life; the younger died in the zenith of her power; and it may be that the loving reverence, both of relatives and readers, so hallowed her memory, that the survivor, for a time, was overshadowed by the radiance of her fame.

THE HOME AT ONGAR.

Both sisters wrote clear, graphic, elegant prose, as well as poetry. Jane's "Contributions of Q.Q.," and her story of "Display," and other writings, prove her skill. But Anne was a journalist and a reviewer. She wrote for *The Eclectic* in its palmy days, when some of the leading minds among our great men—as Revs. John Foster and Robert Hall—were contributors. It was not until the recent publication of Mrs. Gilbert's Life, one of the most interesting biographies of our time, prolific as it is in this department of writing, that her real genius was known.

Removal to Ongar, in Essex, and the residence there during the last eighteen years of their father's life, has caused people to speak of the household as if Ongar was the only locality associated with their celebrity. It certainly was a very dear and memorable residence to them all, consecrated both by life and death.

On December 24, 1813, Miss Anne Taylor was married to the Rev. J. Gilbert, then the classical tutor at Rotherham College; and for some years after, though her literary pursuits were never entirely relinquished, the cares of a rapidly-increasing and large family demanded her attention, and she proved to them and to their father, a tender guide, instructress, helper, companion, friend—the same inestimable wife and mother that her own early home had possessed. At Rotherham, at Hull, and finally at Nottingham, she was the centre of a

household that emulated and inherited her virtues, and of a wider circle that loved and honoured her.

Jane was for some years after her sister's marriage more closely associated with her beloved brother Isaac, and the most tender friendship subsisted between them. As Isaac's health was delicate,—and the youngest child of the family at Ongar was a daughter, Jemima, who became the devoted attendant on her mother,—Jane went with her brother to Devon and to Cornwall. At Marazion, in Mount's Bay, many of Jane's later works were written; and it was no small comfort to the good father in his declining years, and to the mother, as delicacy of health, increased by her deafness, pressed on her, that Jane was realizing an independence by her writings.

It is strange to read that although their father wished to make his daughters artists, he at first shrunk from their being engaged in literature. "I have no wish that my daughters should be authors," he had said, when their honourable career was first opening before them. He lived to retract that wish; for not only his daughters, but his wife, when released by years from the pressure of domestic cares, became a very successful writer on domestic and educational subjects. Her pen was the solace to Mrs. Taylor's infirmities; and the substitute for the companionship of her children, as they had to leave the "old house at home."

In the year 1823, Miss Jane Taylor's health began

to fail. She had symptoms of a painful malady; but her patience and hopefulness prevented her family for a long time from thinking her case so serious as it was. Her brother Isaac was to her the same devoted friend that she had, during his illness, been to him. After trial of other places, in search of health, Jane returned to Ongar; and, as her strength declined, it was her beloved brother who carried her up and down stairs, and tried by every means, aided by the solicitude of the tenderest parents, to cheer the sufferer. And she was cheered; for heavenly support was given her, and her mind was stayed in perfect peace.

The decline was so gradual, that the end was rather sudden. She herself was the first to announce the change she felt. On the 13th of April, 1824, she cheerfully said, "Put me on a clean cap, and set the room to rights, for I am going." In answer to an inquiry of her father's, she said, in a firm voice, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil;" and then lay quite still. About a quarter of an hour before her death, her youngest brother, Jeffrey, asked her if she felt any pain. She replied, "No, dear; only a little sleepy;" and soon after, with one long sigh, she died * to the deep grief and loss of her parents and family—to her own eternal gain.

* Autobiography and other Memorials of Mrs. Gilbert, vol. ii. p. 49.

One shrinks from thinking what the grief of such parents must have been for such a daughter. But they were true Christians, and therefore their consolations were not few nor small.

Not quite five years after this loss, the family were bereaved of their beloved father. He was, notwithstanding several attacks of illness, full of mental vigour to the last. He died suddenly, on December 12th, 1829. His wife—his other self—did not linger long after him. In five months her spirit was released from the fetters of the body, and went to join her husband in praising that dear Redeemer in heaven, whom they had so long devoutly loved and followed on earth.

Mrs. Gilbert, as before stated, lived what may be called a complete life. She sustained every relationship and responsibility—daughter, sister, wife, mother, widow, friend—excellent in all. She retained her youthful feelings and cheerful sympathies to the age of eighty-four. Her latest writings showed no abatement of mental power, while her noble mind, enlarged by her greater experience, hailed every sign of progress in female education, in social and political reforms. She was not visited by any severe illness, nor, except a slight deafness, with any infirmity. Still she was ready; her lamp ever burning, and her spirit waiting for her Saviour's call.

She wrote up her diary, had settled all her yearly accounts, for Christmas was approaching;

and with a smile, kissing her daughter twice,—saying, first—"That's for 'thank you;'" and then again—"and that's for 'good-night,'"—she retired to rest.

The next morning, the family could not rouse her. She slept gently on—still slept. The day wore on to night, and still she gently slept; once there dawned a slight shadow of a smile—then the breathing was a little heavier—and then, with a single sigh, the land of clouds and death was left for that of light and life, on December 20th, 1866.

"Oh! not 'till brittle walls,
'Till life's gay glittering show,
'Till each in ruin falls,
Shall the freed spirit know
Its growth, its strength, its native skies.
Poor captive soul, awake, arise!"

Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.

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